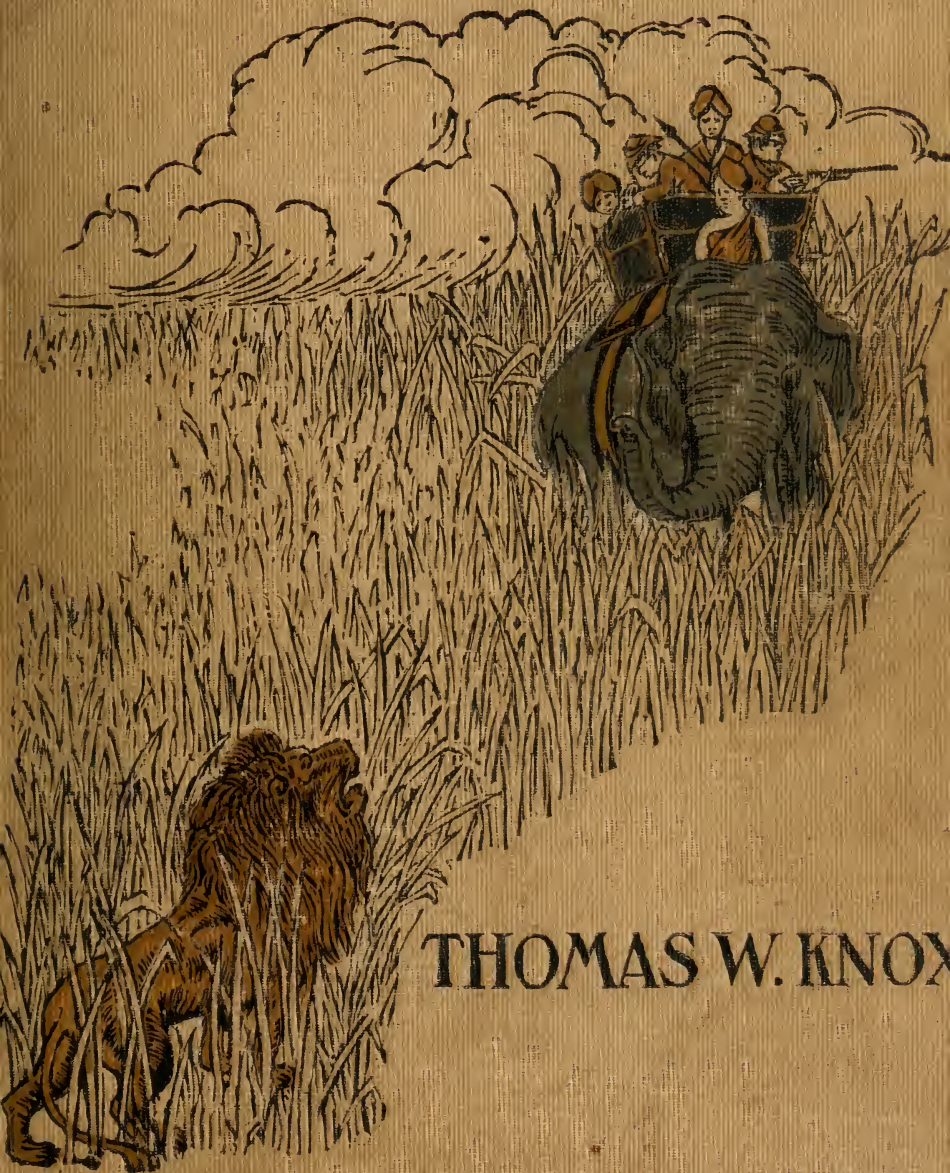


IN WILD AFRICA



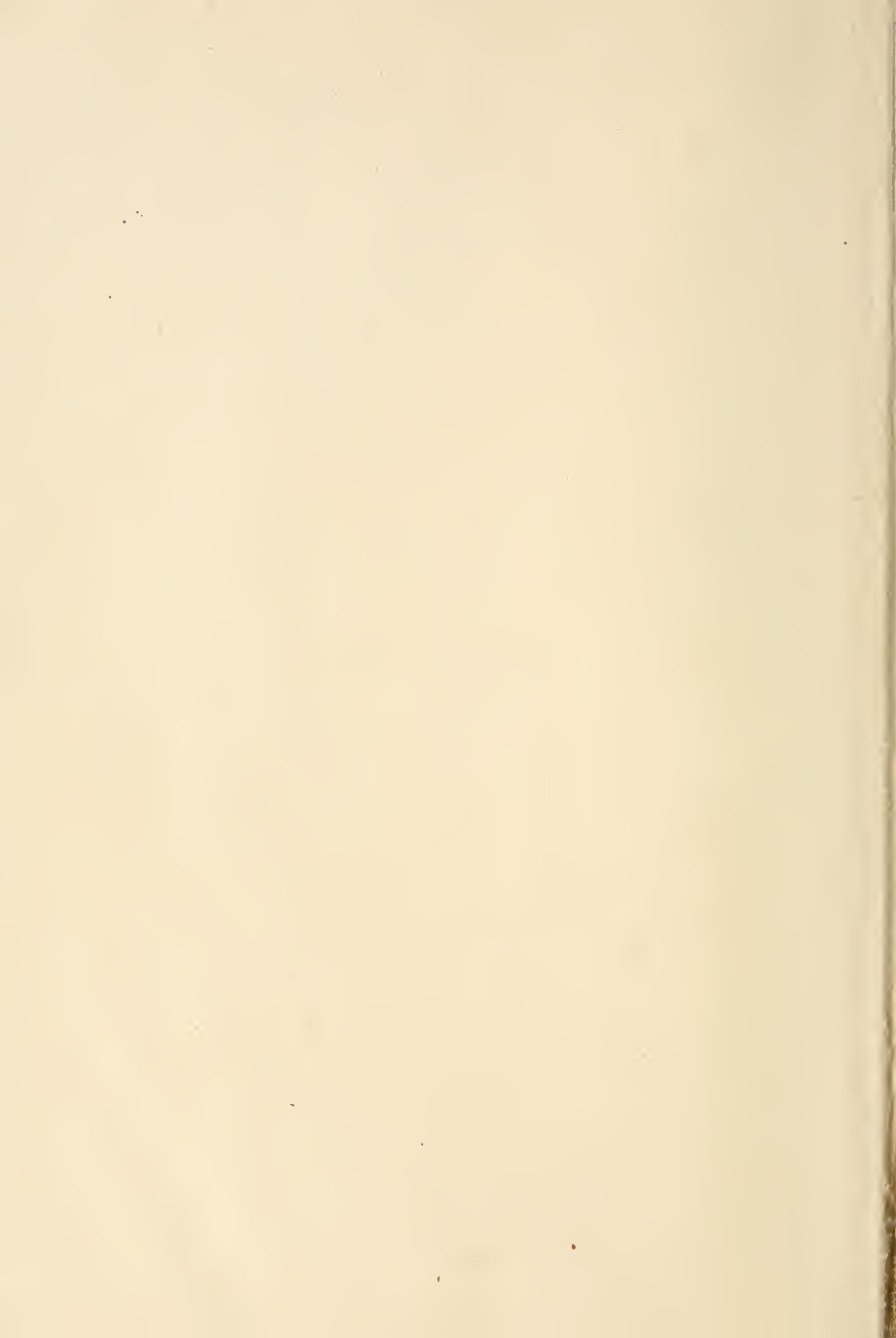
THOMAS W. KNOX



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

PRESENTED BY
PROF. CHARLES A. KOFOID AND
MRS. PRUDENCE W. KOFOID

Master Leo Davitt
420 Willow st
San Jose Cal



In Wild Africa.

TRAVEL-ADVENTURE SERIES.

IN WILD AFRICA. Adventures of Two Boys in the Sahara Desert. By THOMAS W. KNOX. 325 pages. With five Illustrations by H. BURGESS. \$1.50.

THE LAND OF THE KANGAROO. Adventures of Two Boys in the Great Island Continent. By Colonel THOMAS W. KNOX. 318 pages. Illustrated by H. BURGESS. \$1.50.

OVER THE ANDES ; or, Our Boys in New South America. By HEZEKIAH BUTTERWORTH. 370 pages. With five Illustrations by HENRY SANDHAM. \$1.50.

LOST IN NICARAGUA ; or, Among Coffee Farms and Banana Lands, in the Countries of the Great Canal. By HEZEKIAH BUTTERWORTH. 296 pages. With five Illustrations by H. BURGESS. \$1.50.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



IN WILD AFRICA

*ADVENTURES OF TWO YOUTHS IN A
JOURNEY THROUGH THE SAHARA DESSERT*

BY

THOMAS W. KNOX

Author of "The Boy Travellers," (15 vols.), "Overland
Through Asia," etc., etc.

Illustrated and with colored frontispiece

by H. BURGESS



BOSTON and CHICAGO
W. A. WILDE COMPANY

COPYRIGHT, 1895,
By W. A. WILDE & COMPANY.

All rights reserved.

IN WILD AFRICA.

DT 339
K5

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. DEPARTURE FOR ALGIERS — Entering the desert .	7
II. A REFRACTORY MULE — Starting from Biskra — The first camp	24
III. SALT LAKES OF THE DESERT — A lion hunt . . .	42
IV. PHENOMENA OF THE DESERT — Arab horses . . .	59
V. DESERT GARDENS — Hunting the Leopard and Ostriches	75
VI. CAUGHT IN A SAND STORM — A dangerous country	95
VII. IN SIGHT OF WAREGLA — An Arab dinner	110
VIII. EXPLORING WAREGLA — Home of the Tuaregs . .	127
IX. ON THE ROAD — Curing a sheikh	142
X. GADAMES — The caravan trade	158
XI. EL HASI TO MOURZOUK — Kingdom of Fezzan . . .	176
XII. A SLAVE CARAVAN — Lake Chad	192
XIII. AMPHIBIOUS INHABITANTS OF LAKE CHAD — The Bidduma	211
XIV. KUKAWA — Sultan of Bornoo	226
XV. ELEPHANTS IN BORNOO — Hunting gazelles . . .	240
XVI. LEAVING KUKAWA — Killing a big snake	256
XVII. A TOWN IN MOTION — Story from the Niger . . .	272
XVIII. KANO AND SOKOTO — Timbuctoo	289
XIX. DOWN THE NIGER — Mungo Park and the Lander brothers — The end	305



ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
“On their way to the hotel the boys went through the marketplace.” <i>Frontispiece</i>	28
“Calculating his distance as well as he could, he took careful aim.” .	52
“Suddenly . . . a band of . . . Arabs, all mounted on horses, made their appearance.”	179
“It gave the doctor and Ned an opportunity to discharge their rifles directly down his throat.”	220
“On and on they came, following the pathway.”	246
“The governor did not rise to receive us —”	281

IN WILD AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

DEPARTURE FOR ALGIERS — ENTERING THE DESERT.

“WOULD you like to go to Africa?”

“Certainly I would, sir,” was the reply.

“Think over it before you decide,” said the other.

“There’s a great deal of hardship in an African journey such as I intend to make, and you might not enjoy it. I’m going into wild Africa, away from the beaten track of travelers, and where the comforts of civilization cannot be obtained.”

“I should like it all the more for that,” was the response.

“The civilized places would be interesting, of course, but they would not have the novelty and excitement of the savage regions of that wonderful continent. No matter where you are going, sir, it would give me great pleasure to be with you, and, if my parents consent, I’m ready to start at any time you name.”

“They have consented already and you may consider it settled. Now go and see if your Cousin Harry would like to be with us, and bring him here with his answer at this time to-morrow.”

The speakers in the foregoing dialogue were Mr. Thomas Whitney, of New York, and his nephew,

Edward, the latter a bright, intelligent youth seventeen years of age, and better known as "Ned." Mr. Whitney was a bachelor, and had a great fondness for travel and exploration. He had visited all parts of the world, spent a winter in the Arctic regions, ascended great mountains in all the continents, and lived and traveled among savage tribes of people in Asia and South America, and lived for several months among the aborigines of Australia. He had a large collection of curiosities which he had gathered in his journeys, and used to say playfully that when he got tired of traveling he intended to open a museum and hang himself up in a showcase as one of the objects of attraction and surprise.

The nephews whom we have mentioned were the sons of Mr. Whitney's brothers, who were also residents of New York. One of these brothers was a merchant and the other a lawyer, and neither of them had shown any fondness for travel. But they were willing that their boys should see something of the world, and before the date of the conversation with which our story opens they had consented that the enterprising youths should accompany their uncle in his journey into Africa. Neither Ned nor Harry had been consulted in the preliminaries, but what boy is likely to say "no" when asked if he would like to go and see foreign lands?

Ned hurried away to find Harry and break the exciting news to him. You may be sure that both the boys were on hand at Mr. Whitney's bachelor apartment at the time indicated on the following day, and that Harry's answer was an emphatic "Yes!"

“That’s all settled,” said Mr. Whitney; “and now we’ll come down to the business of starting.”

“We’ll do anything you want us to, uncle,” said Ned, speaking for Harry as well as for himself. Ned was the elder of the two by about three months and probably concluded that his superiority of age entitled him to “out-rank” his cousin.

“Well, there isn’t much for you to do in the way of buying materials and outfitting generally,” was the reply. “Whatever we wish to take from New York I will order in ample time for our departure. Most of the things we’ll want for our journey can be bought after we get to Africa, or I can have them sent from London. You will need some rough clothing for your journey, but that, too, can be mostly obtained at the same place where we will purchase our equipments. You will want a good stock of underclothing, suitable for a warm country, a suit of corduroy, and two or three suits of blue serge or flannel. Lay in a good supply of boots and shoes, say three or four pairs for each of you; and you will want some suits of canvas or duck, but these we can get as well at our point of departure.

“Are you ready to tell us now to what part of Africa we’re going?” queried Ned.

“I haven’t fully made up my mind as to my route,” replied Mr. Whitney. “I have laid out in a general way that we will first go to Algeria and from there make a journey into the Great Sahara Desert; how far we may go into the desert will depend upon circumstances. If the natives are peaceful, and will allow us to pass, it is my

intention to push quite far to the south. If we find them hostile, we may be obliged to return before going very far, and seek to penetrate the continent by another route. One can never tell very long beforehand how the natives will receive him, and for that reason I cannot say at present exactly where we are going. I have written to friends of mine in Algeria on the subject, but can't look for a reply until three or four weeks from now. In the meantime I want you boys to learn how to take observations of latitude and longitude, and have arranged for Professor Hegeman, of Columbia College, to instruct you. He will expect you at two o'clock this afternoon. Here is the address."

Ned and Harry looked at each other in some astonishment, and for a few seconds they stood speechless; but they quickly recovered themselves, and thanked their uncle for his thoughtfulness in their behalf.

"Oh, that's all right," said Mr. Whitney; "I have for some time been planning this affair, and wanted you to accompany me! I knew it would be a good experience for both of you, and your fathers have freely consented that you should embrace the opportunity to travel. And I intend," he added with a smile, "that you shall not be idlers, by any means. One of the necessities of exploration is to be able to find your position on the earth's surface. Unless you can do so, you are at a great disadvantage at all times, and especially in case your guides should desert you, and you are thrown entirely on your own resources."

"I quite understand that," said Ned; "now that you

speaking of it, I remember that when Stanley made his first trip into Africa he had not studied astronomy, and did not know how to take observations. Probably he never thought of it when he made his preparations for the trip, but before he set out on his second journey he fully informed himself, and ever afterwards could take his latitude and longitude without any assistance."

"Why don't you say 'Mr. Stanley'?" Harry whispered to Ned as the latter paused, and the doctor was busy examining a paper that lay before him on the desk.

"Because that isn't the way to speak of him," Ned replied somewhat haughtily. "It was all right to call him 'Mr.' down to and after his first journey, but now he's 'Stanley,' and stands by himself. You might just as well say 'Mr. Cæsar,' 'Mr. Hannibal,' or 'Mr. Napoleon.' When a man has climbed as high on the pinnacle of fame as Stanley has he doesn't need any handle to his name."

"That's right," said Mr. Whitney, who was taking in the conversation at the same time that he was looking at the documents on his desk. "And I want both of you to hope that one day your names may be so well known that they can be treated in the same way."

"There'll be a difficulty about that!" exclaimed Harry, "because there are three of us all of the same name; but I don't think we'll worry about it at present. It's time to be off, Ned, to get around on time for our first lesson in navigation."

"Yes, that's so," replied Ned, "and we'll bid you good day, uncle. When shall we come again?"

“Oh, drop in any day you like, about this hour. Stop a moment! one thing I almost forgot. I'll have some books here for you to-morrow that you can take home and read; the works of various African travelers of the past twenty-five years. Meantime you can stop at Regand's book store and get Sir Henry Drummond's 'Tropical Africa' and Mrs. French-Sheldon's 'Sultan to Sultan.' They are not included in the selection I have, and we will want to take them along; and you will wish to read them. What with your studies in taking observations and reading up on Africa, your time will be fully employed until we are ready to leave New York.”

From that time on there were no more industrious students in New York than Ned and Harry Whitney, and before the day of departure arrived they were pretty well versed in the theoretical knowledge of the work laid out for them. They learned the uses of the instruments they were to take along, and they went several times to points in the neighborhood of New York, once into Westchester County, once to Staten Island, and once to Long Island, thirty or forty miles from the city, to make a practical test of their knowledge. The professor praised their energy and intelligence, and pronounced them fit for their work. He impressed upon them very forcibly the necessity of the greatest possible accuracy in everything that they did.

“Remember,” said he, “that a very small error in an observation will make a difference of several miles in your location, and that you must never be satisfied with an approximation when it is possible to get anything else.

Where time permits, it will be always advisable for both of you to make the same observation, independent of one another, and then compare the results. If they are exactly the same, you can be satisfied that you are correct; where there is a difference, you must not be content until you ascertain the error and the cause of it."

In due time Mr. Whitney received the letters he expected from Algeria, and then the party took passage on the first steamer leaving for Algiers. We will henceforth call Mr. Whitney "Doctor," as he had studied medicine, and taken a diploma from a medical college, but he had never practised the art of healing in a regular way; that is, he had never established an office or set himself up as a regular physician, his practice being limited to himself and the companions of his travels and explorations. When at home in America he repudiated the medical title altogether, and hence we have refrained from giving it until he started for a foreign land.

Including the instruments, books, and personal baggage generally, the party was well provided at the time it left New York. The doctor deemed it advisable to make some of his purchases in his native city, as there were certain delicacies and requisites which he would be unable to find in the Algerian market. Ned asked if it wasn't proper to take a stock of medicines along, and whether they could be procured at the point where they were to begin their journey.

"I have already ordered the medicines from Mr. Wellcome, the gentleman whom you met one evening at your father's house two or three months ago. He is an American

established in London, and it is part of his business to equip explorers with medical supplies. He outfitted Stanley in his last two expeditions and has done the same thing for other explorers, African, Arctic, Australian, and others. We will find our store of medicines awaiting us, all put up in strong cases ready for transportation."

"That's very convenient, certainly," Ned answered, "and it is a pity that everything can't be supplied in the same way."

"Yes, it is a pity," replied the doctor, "but the outfitting business is carried to such an extent in London that the work of the explorer is greatly simplified from what it used to be. The outfitting establishments there keep large stocks of goods on hand, and for special purposes will get almost anything you want, but at the same time it is necessary to rely very largely upon the supplies attainable at the point of departure."

The party had a pleasant voyage across the Atlantic, and through the Mediterranean, and in due time reached Algiers. They stopped a few hours at Gibraltar, giving the boys sufficient time to ascend to the top of the famous Rock and look from the observatory through the Straits and out upon the ocean, and also to study the shores of Europe and Africa as far as they could be seen. They traversed the galleries hewn out of the solid rock and armed with cannon, and were specially interested in St. George's Gallery, where, just previous to the battle of Trafalgar, Lord Nelson was banqueted by the officers of the garrison. Cape Trafalgar, where Lord Nelson gained his famous victory and met his death, is not far from

Gibraltar, and its direction was pointed out to the youths by the sergeant in charge of the observatory.

As the steamer came in front of Algiers, Ned and Harry looked at the place with great interest. Ned remarked that it was a spot of white on a green stretch of steep hillsides, and Harry endorsed the description as a good one. The hillside on which Algiers stands is a steep one, and the houses rise one above another, like a series of terraces. All are whitewashed or built of light-colored stone, and as the hills on each side of the town and back of it are generally of a bright green, the effect is striking. The housetops are flat and have high curbs around them. These housetops are the lounging places of the women and the playgrounds of the children, and in former times, before the French conquest, men were not allowed there until after sunset. Consuls were exempt from this rule, but even for them it was not advisable to go very frequently to the housetops in daytime.

Doctor Whitney met several friends and acquaintances in Algiers, some of whom were evidently expecting him, as they came to the Hotel d'Orient, where the party lodged, before they were there fifteen minutes. While he was busy with them Ned and Harry went out to see the town.

"It is a funny-looking place," Ned wrote in a letter to his mother, "as it seems to be about half European and half African. There are blocks of houses that are absolutely European in every feature, and might have been taken bodily, so we are told, from a French city. The shops in those blocks are all French; the keepers are all natives of France or their descendants, and the goods they

sell were made in France or some other European country. As we strolled about we suddenly stepped from the French to the native quarter, and it was done, as you may say, in the twinkling of an eye. Here the buildings were all of the Moorish style of architecture,—blank walls facing the street with now and then a door opening upon it. These doors are always small; some of them stood wide open, and we tried to peep in, but peeping was very disappointing, as the passage-way from the door makes a sharp angle which prevents your seeing anything. In this part of the city nearly all the people that we saw wore the native dress, and the most of the women had their faces covered with veils.

“The shops in the native quarter of the city were just as Moorish in their appearance as the French shops were French. They are generally little narrow cubby-holes, about six or seven feet wide, and as many deep; some of them are so small that the shopkeeper can squat in the middle of the floor and reach every article in his entire stock without rising to his feet. Harry remarked, as he stood in front of one of those little places, that there wasn’t room enough to swing a cat around by the tail. We thought the keeper didn’t understand English, but he did, and answered:—

“‘Me no want to swing cat; me no have cat for swing.’

“We heard some music in the Great Square, or Place de la Republique, and went in its direction,” continued Ned in his letter. “The music was excellent, and was given by the band of one of the French regiments

stationed here, but we were much more interested in the crowd than in the music. About one half of the people were in European dress and did not interest us particularly, but the other half was made up of various tribes and people of northern Africa. There were Arabs and Kabyles, who live among the hills near Algiers, or in the city itself. The Arabs walked about with a great deal of dignity, dressed entirely in white, including their heads, which were swathed in the same material. They evidently considered themselves lords of the land, and that is what they were before the French conquest.

“The Kabyles have more color in their garments than the Arabs have, and, instead of wrapping their heads in white, they usually cover them with the red fez, or tarboosh. Then there were pure-blooded negroes, some of them natives of this region, and others who were originally brought from the far interior and sold as slaves in Morocco. Slavery is not permitted in Algeria, and the slaves in Morocco know it very well. They make their way over the border, and, though sometimes their masters succeed in getting their human property back again, they do not as a general thing. There was a considerable number of French and other European women in the crowd, but not many native ones. I am told that the native women here are quite secluded, though not so much so as in Turkey, Morocco, and some other Moslem countries.”

Doctor Whitney decided to make his departure from Biskra, which is at the end of the railway recently completed from Constantine to that point. Biskra is to the south and east of Algiers, and to reach it the party jour-

neyed eastward to Constantine and Philippville. Twenty-five or thirty years ago the railway was completed from Philippville to Constantine, a distance of some sixty odd miles. There is some fine engineering on this line occasioned by the passage of the railway through a range of hills. It was among these hills that Jules Gerard, the famous lion hunter, performed many of his exploits. When Ned heard this the desire seized him to go out and shoot a lion, but he was dissuaded from so doing when the doctor told him that they could not spare the time for a lion hunt, and besides there were no lions to be found there now.

The party spent three or four days in Constantine, the doctor being pretty actively engaged in purchasing goods, tents, provisions, and other things required for the journey. As fast as the articles were bought they were sent forward to Biskra, where the goods brought by steamer from New York preceded them. On the fifth day the party took the train for Biskra, going by way of Batna, a modern French town built on the ruins of an old Roman one. From the windows of the car in which our friends rode they looked out upon the ruins, and Ned called attention to a monument in the shape of a pyramid, about twenty feet high.

"That monument has a curious history," said the doctor. "When the French came here it was very much dilapidated, many of the stones having been thrown down and scattered. The 3d French Engineers camped here, and its colonel set the men to work collecting the stones that belonged to the monument. An inscription showed that it was to the memory of the commander of the 3d

Roman Legion, who was buried under the monument, and the stones that had not been disturbed were taken up, one by one, until the coffin, also of stone, was reached. The lid was raised and the skeleton of the old Roman was found undisturbed. The lid was immediately replaced, and then the monument was built up again, every stone being carefully restored to its position. When all was completed the French colonel turned out his entire regiment, marched past the monument, and fired a salute in honor of his predecessor of two thousand years ago."

"What a very romantic story," Ned remarked; "and what a sentimental man that French colonel was!"

"Quite true," said the doctor; "and I can tell you another story of the same sort. We shall pass through a gorge just at the entrance to the Sahara where there is an ancient bridge; it was quite dilapidated when the French came here, and they repaired it. On the wall of the gorge, close by the bridge, there is an inscription in Latin which was made nearly two thousand years ago, announcing that the bridge was built by the 3d Roman Legion; underneath it is an inscription in French, made about 1850, which says that it was repaired by the 3d French Engineers."

The train moved on beyond Batna, taking a general course to the south. The youths were constantly studying the landscape, first on one side of the train and then on the other, and calling each other's attention to anything that was new and curious. The train slowly ascended a gently sloping hillside, and on reaching its summit the pace was quickened as the locomotive began the descent.

In a little while Harry called attention to the scarcity of vegetation; the grass was in little tussocks, small bushes lined the banks of the little streams or the dry channels where the indications were that streams flowed in time of heavy rain, but there were no trees by the roadside, and no orchards or forests were visible. After this had continued for a little time Ned remarked:—

“I wonder if we are not in the desert?”

“I was just thinking of that myself,” said Harry in a half whisper to his cousin. “Just look at those mountains off ahead of us; there isn’t a tree or bush on any of them; they are as barren as a door-knob, or the outside of a pitcher. The country doesn’t look so very different at a general glance from what it was further north, but when you take it in detail there’s a great difference.”

Ned appealed the question to his uncle, who informed them that they were already in the desert, and had been ever since they passed the crest of the ridge.

“The desert began there,” said he. “The little streams that you now see flow into the Sahara and are lost there. North of that ridge, in the region called The Tell, the streams, such as they are, flow into the Mediterranean. The region where we now are is included in the Sahara Basin, although it is not in the desert portion. There are a good many places between here and Biskra where the land is fertile, or comparatively so. Rain is not infrequent in these regions, and where the land is so situated that the water doesn’t readily flow off it is quite productive.

Later in the day they reached El Kantara (The Bridge),

which gets its name from a famous bridge built by the Romans, and repaired by the French, as already stated. Here there is a gorge through which a small river flows, the sides of the cliff being nearly precipitous. Between the river and the side of the gorge there is barely space enough for a road, and for a considerable part of the distance the railway track is laid in a niche in the cliff. As the train emerged from the gorge a grand transformation scene was presented to the eyes of the travelers.

They came suddenly upon an oasis, the first oasis in the desert as one descends there from the north. Thousands upon thousands of date palms grow there; the water for their nourishment being diverted from the river as it comes out of the gorge. Ned had already informed himself concerning date palms, and so he assumed the position of Mentor, and proceeded to enlighten Harry on the subject. Here is substantially what he said: —

“The date palm cannot exist without water, and the Arabs say that it must have its feet in water and its head in the fire. A hot sun and a cloudless sky are necessary for its development, and it must have an abundant supply of water at its root, or it will surely die. The water is brought to it in channels or water courses, and sometimes carried for short distances in goat skins. You observe as you are riding along that there is a trench around each tree; well, they put a barrel of water in that trench every other day, and that keeps the palm tree alive.”

“Thank you,” said Harry; “but tell me where the dates grow.”

“Oh, the dates grow in that bunch, or crown, up there

at the top, right in the center of the leaves. The Arabs take great pains in the cultivation of their date palms, and they watch these clusters, or regimes, as they call them, to prevent any possible harm. When the dates are ripening they keep watchers among the trees to scare away the birds, and when the time of harvest comes they are very particular to collect the regimes when they are in their best condition."

The dark green of the oasis made a marked contrast to the yellow hills in the background, and presented a picture that the boys were not likely to forget. Long after they had gone beyond the oasis they continued to talk about it, and wondered when they would see the next one. Dr. Whitney overheard them, and said the next oasis of any consequence was at Biskra, and they anxiously looked forward to their arrival at that point.

On and on sped the train at a dignified pace of not more than eighteen miles an hour. Ned found out that it was an express train, and wondered what would be the speed of an ordinary one, when an express was so slow. He asked the conductor on that point and was informed that the ordinary passenger train went only ten miles an hour, and was very often late at that.

By and by they ascended a sandy slope and at its top experienced another surprise.

As the train came to the crest of the ridge it paused to take either breath, water, or fuel, or for some other purpose, so Harry explained. As the youths looked from the window their gaze extended over a low plain which stretched as far as the eye could reach, with a horizon

like that of the ocean. In fact, the outspread level was wonderfully like the ocean or a great lake in its appearance; so much so that Ned remarked that they seemed to have reached a great bed of water.

“You’re by no means the first to think so,” said the doctor. “Many a traveler here has made the same remark, and when the first French expedition to spread the conquest of Algeria reached this point, the soldiers, as fast as they came to the crest of the ridge, shouted in joy, ‘*La mer! La mer!*’ thinking they had reached the sea.”

“I don’t wonder at it,” said Harry; “it appears wonderfully like the sea. And look! There are islands dotted all over it. I suppose those must be oases, are they not?”

“Yes, they are oases,” replied Doctor Whitney, “and they make the illusion perfect. You see now how the desert has been so appropriately called ‘The Sea of Sand’; the camel is the ship of the desert because, as natural history tells you, he can lay in provisions and water for seven or eight days. He looms up high in the air, just as a ship does, and he makes long voyages from one part of the desert to another.”

Just then the train began to move again, and the doctor told his young companions that they might consider themselves fairly embarked on the Great Sahara.

Biskra was in full view from the ridge, as it was the nearest oasis, and only a few miles away. In less than half an hour the travelers were at the railway station where they bade farewell to locomotives and cars, preparatory to their journey where railway tracks do not abound.

CHAPTER II.

A REFRACTORY MULE—STARTING FROM BISKRA—THE FIRST CAMP.

SO impatient were the youths to investigate the oasis that they suggested that they would walk to the hotel from the railway station, instead of riding. The doctor assented to their proposal, but suggested that they should remain at the station until the baggage had been put in charge of the courier from the hotel and the various pieces indicated. This took only a few minutes, and then they set out upon their stroll, after ascertaining the route to the hostelry where they were to be lodged during their stay in Biskra.

They passed along wide avenues and streets lined with palm trees and bordered here and there by luxuriant gardens. The richness of the vegetable growth in the oasis was in marked contrast to the barren desert over which they had traveled; and both Ned and Harry realized that it was this contrast between the two that led to the universal praise bestowed on oases everywhere throughout the great deserts.

“It reminds me,” said Ned, “of the enthusiasm of travelers who visit Damascus and seem to become half wild over the abundance of its waters. I never fully understood it until I remembered that Damascus stands in

the desert, and those who visit the city, especially from the eastward, are obliged to travel long distances where there are neither trees nor springs. Consequently, when they reach the gates of that ancient city, and linger in its streets and houses, they appreciate in the highest possible degree the water that bubbles in every courtyard and flows in every dwelling."

"This is a pretty good-sized oasis," said Harry, "larger than I thought it was; it is about five miles long, and more than two miles across its broadest part, contains 100,000 date palms, and has a considerable portion of its area laid out in gardens and fields. They grow three crops a year in the gardens—at least, I read so in a book—and they have an abundant supply of water all the year round."

They stopped to look at a little garden where two natives were at work under the supervision of a Frenchman. It turned out that the Frenchman was the owner of the establishment and the natives were in his employ. He greeted the strangers cordially, and seemed very glad to meet them; he was evidently, as Ned remarked, "loaded" with information, and hardly waited to be "fired off." The natives were engaged in watering the garden, and the boys were curious to see the process. Their curiosity was quickly satisfied, as the whole thing could be taken in at a glance.

There was a little channel, perhaps about six inches wide, coming in at the upper end of the garden and admitting a stream of water which flowed into a tank. The tank was fifteen or twenty feet long, and not more than

two feet wide, running across the head of the garden. From this tank some eight or ten small channels were diverted, and they carried water all over the rest of the space. These channels ran in parallel lines, so that the ground on either side of them was kept well moistened, no matter how hot the sun might be. Ned asked how often it was necessary to water the garden, and the Frenchman replied that they watered it three times a week in the cooler part of the year, and every day in the height of summer.

“The water never gives out,” said the Frenchman; “it comes from a great spring up there near the foot of the hill where you see the fort. It is hot where it issues from the ground, but it gets cool on its way to the oasis.”

As he spoke, he pointed to a low hill toward the north, about two miles away from where they were. Then he went on to tell them that the fort they were looking at was built hundreds of years ago, he did not know how many. Before the French conquered Algeria the fort was held by the Turks. They were not on pleasant terms with the people of the oasis, but the latter were quite at their mercy, and were compelled to do whatever their rulers desired. Whenever the Turkish commander at the fort made a demand upon the natives which they refused to obey he proceeded to divert the water of the stream into the desert, cutting it off from the oasis; this never failed to bring the Arabs to terms. The absence of water meant death to their palm trees and gardens. The pressure was so great that it could not be resisted, and they speedily ceased their resistance.

“The natives of this part of the country,” the man continued, “were very much opposed to French rule and fought hard against the conquest. Some months after we had captured Biskra they formed a conspiracy, rose one night, and slaughtered every man in the garrison, but they wouldn’t do so now. They have prospered under French rule more than ever before, and would be very sorry to have the French go away. One thing that the French have done since they came here has endeared them very greatly to the people, and that is the boring of artesian wells in many of the oases.

“For a long time before the French Conquest the supply of water in the desert had been gradually growing less. Several oases had dried up and died altogether, and the inhabitants were driven out or perished by starvation and thirst. Even the large oases were diminishing in size, the palm trees were dying out gradually, year by year, and the prospect ahead was gloomy.

“The French commanders were men of intelligence. They knew that this part of the Sahara was below the level of the Mediterranean, and believed that if artesian wells were bored they would bring forth liberal supplies of water. They tried the experiment in some of the oases that were drying up, and found it successful, and then they tried it on a larger scale in some of the greater oases.

“The most successful well that they put down was at Tuggurt, about two hundred miles south of Biskra, where a vein of water was struck and gushed forth at the rate of about five thousand gallons a minute. That was more

than forty years ago, and it has been flowing at that rate ever since. When the Arabs saw this fine stream of water they went fairly wild with delight; celebrations were kept up for several days, and the invaders, who had been despised and hated, were from that time on regarded as friends and benefactors. The system of boring these wells was carried on all through the desert; the drying up of the oases was brought to an end, and many that had been abandoned were restored to life again."

The attention of our young friends was directed to the spectacle of a native boy climbing a date palm. Any one who has seen a palm tree knows that it is without branches, other than a single tuft at the top, the leaves being cut away as the stem rises from the ground, so that in ascending a tree the climber has nothing to which he can cling. In the present instance the boy went up the tree with great rapidity, using a piece of rope about six feet long, and with a knot at each end. He passed the rope around the body of the tree and then grasped it at both ends, flinging the middle of it as high in the air as he could. Then, pulling it taut, he lifted himself by means of the rope, placing his feet in the notches where the old leaves had been cut away. By pulling the rope, he went up two or three steps, then he flung the middle of the rope up again, and repeated the process of moving upward. In an astonishingly short time he was at the top of the tree, and when he was ready to descend again he came down quite as quickly as he went up, and in the same manner.

On their way to the hotel the boys went through the market place. The market of Biskra is a building occu-



"ON THEIR WAY TO THE HOTEL THE BOYS WENT THROUGH THE
MARKETPLACE "

pying the greater part of a square ; it stands on arches and is quite open in the interior. The articles exposed for sale there were a strange medley of European and African products, the latter predominating. There were dried dates in great quantities, and also barley, wheat, oats, and garden vegetables innumerable, and there were live fowls, with their feet tied together, in great numbers. The climate is so warm that dressed fowls are less desirable than live ones, owing to the rapidity of decay. Sometimes the purchasers take the birds home and slaughter and dress them, but they may have that work performed in the market if they wish.

Live goats and kids were also for sale, and there was a limited supply of beef and mutton. The butchers do not care to prepare more of these perishable meats than they are absolutely sure of selling in a single day, as ice is practically unknown at Biskra, and the little that is made there is altogether too dear for general uses. Goatskins, camels' hair cloaks and blankets, cotton cloths of a coarse variety, and other goods of African production were quite abundant. French and English cutlery, iron mongery, and the like were in abundance, and in some of the shops the variety of goods was equal to that of a notion store in New York or Philadelphia.

The people in the market place were quite as various as were the articles that were offered for sale. Those from Europe were nearly all French, though there were a few Italians, more Hebrews, two or three Greeks, half a dozen Maltese, and an assorted and numerous lot of natives of the country. The Arabs were the most numerous, and

the variety of their dress showed them to belong to different tribes. The demeanor of most of them was dignified, and especially that of some men who were said to be Tuaregs. They were dressed in dirty white cotton cloth, and their heads were thickly covered with the same material, together with a large handkerchief bound tightly around. The appearance of these men was so striking that it was the first thing which Ned and Harry mentioned when they joined the doctor at the hotel.

The doctor answered that the Tuaregs were nomads of the desert. They had no permanent abiding place, but wandered from one oasis to another, covering a wide range of territory. He said that they were independent of the French, or any other authority, and did pretty much as they pleased; not infrequently they had sharp fights with the French, and sometimes came off victorious, though generally they were defeated; not from any lack of courage on their part, but owing to the superiority of French weapons. "From our point of view," said he, "they are great thieves, and are very much given to plundering caravans, which they regard as a perfectly legitimate and honest occupation. They are somewhat averse to shedding blood, and do not do so unless provoked!"

Ned asked how much provocation they required to induce them to indulge in slaughter.

"It doesn't take a great deal," the doctor answered. "If a party of individuals or a caravan is attacked by them, and makes no resistance, allowing the Tuaregs to plunder without restriction, they rarely do any violence to

the travelers. But if resistance is offered, and is unsuccessful, these desert robbers are merciless, and slaughter all who have opposed them. Some travelers, while making their way through the desert purposely go unarmed, so that if they encounter a band of Tuaregs they can be robbed of all they have, sometimes even all their clothing, and then permitted to go on. They think that is better than running the risk of massacre."

"Shall we follow that plan, uncle?" said Harry, as the doctor paused.

The doctor hesitated a moment, and then said quietly, but firmly:—

"We shall carry some weapons with us. I don't propose to be unresistingly robbed in the desert. But I don't think there is much danger of our being disturbed, as the Tuaregs are at present on very good terms with the French, and no raids have been made on caravans or other traveling parties for several months."

"Let us hope that this freedom from attack will continue," said Ned; "at any rate, until we are through with our journey."

The rest of the day was spent in sight-seeing, and the next morning the work of preparing for the desert was begun vigorously. The doctor had engaged two men accustomed to desert travel, who were picked up at Constantine and sent in advance to Biskra to secure the necessary camels. Just at that time the supply of camels was not large, but they succeeded in buying or hiring all that they needed, both for saddle use, and the transportation of goods. Most of the articles to be carried on the

journey were in packages suitably adapted for making a load for a camel, but the majority of the packages needed rearrangement, and this involved the hiring of additional men who were accustomed to that kind of work. Doctor Whitney was quite actively employed in seeing that this business was properly done, as he felt that he could not trust any of the Arabs to do it exactly as he told them. In the latter part of his stay he employed a trusty Frenchman, and thus lightened his own labors.

Ned and Harry were also of material assistance in keeping an eye over the workmen and doing other things. They found it difficult at first to make themselves understood, but rapidly picked up a knowledge of Arabic sufficient for their purpose. After a few days' experience, Ned came to the conclusion that the Arabs were the worst liars he had ever seen; and later on in his experience he said he had found no reason to change his mind.

"These fellows," said Ned, "will stand up and lie in the most unblushing manner imaginable, and they lie, too, when they know they will be discovered in a very few minutes. For instance, I asked one of them one day if he had filled the water-skins.

"‘I filled them all,’ said he, ‘and put them on the camels.’

"I looked towards the camels, and saw that not one of them had received its burden; near where they stood were the empty water-skins lying on the ground.

"‘What’s that?’ I asked him, pointing to the empty water-skins.

“He replied that those were the skins, and when I told him they were not filled, and were not on the camels, he made no reply. I asked him what he meant by lying to me, and he promptly answered that he would have filled the skins, but had no time to do it.

“If you put a question to an Arab, and he knows the answer, he may possibly give it to you correctly, but if he doesn't know it, he will give you the first reply he can think of. Ask him how far it is to a certain place which you know is ten miles away; he will tell you it is a mile, five miles, fifty, or even a hundred. It is all the same to him. He won't admit that there is anything that he doesn't know, but if he can't tell you correctly he will jump at a conclusion with an air of the most serene confidence.”

We will let Ned tell the story of the starting of the expedition.

“The men that the doctor engaged at Constantine belonged to one of the northern tribes of Arabs, but had traveled so much in the desert that they were quite familiar with it. Their names were Selim and Ali; Selim was an accomplished rogue, and Ali was another; we differed in opinion as to who was the worst, but either of them was bad enough. As long as we stood over them they did fairly well, but that was not the case when our backs were turned. They pilfered quite a number of things out of our stores, and Harry and I wondered that the doctor kept them as long as he did. We told him of various instances of wrong-doing on the part of these men, to which he answered that he was looking for substitutes

with which to replace them, and had applied to the French commander to aid him.

“The morning before we were to leave Biskra three other men were engaged, and Selim and Ali were sent back to Constantine by first train. One of the new employees was a Frenchman about forty years of age, very active and energetic. His name was Jacques Renaud; he had been a soldier in the French cavalry, and after serving his time had decided to remain in Algeria, instead of going back to France. He had traveled a good deal in the desert, spoke Arab fluently, and was a thoroughly good manager. The other two were Arabs, and their names were Yusef and Abdallah. As Arabs, they were good from our point of view, as they were not nearly as accomplished in lying as their predecessors, and could be relied on fairly well, especially when they had Renaud’s eye upon them.

“When they had been installed in office, and the others had been sent away, Harry and I understood why Selim and Ali were kept as long as they were. Renaud and his two companions had just arrived from the south, the commandant having sent for them; the doctor wanted the work of preparation to go on while waiting for them, and so he made use of the best tools in his hands.

“We were delayed somewhat in getting our cooking utensils and a few other things. The price of water-skins rose in the market as soon as we began to make purchases, but fortunately the supply was in so many hands that a combination was not affected, and the advance was small. Besides, the doctor threatened to pur-

chase only a few at Biskra and wait until he reached a more southern oasis before completing his supply.

“These water-skins are a necessity for every traveler in the desert. They consist of goat-skins removed as nearly whole as possible, and then carefully sewn up, except at the neck or one of the forelegs, into which the water is poured while filling, and from which it is poured when wanted. They are also made from pig-skins, which are stronger and more durable than goat-skins, but Moslems have an objection to carrying water in these receptacles, as they consider the pig an unclean beast. Some African explorers have carried water in cans made of sheet-iron or other metals, the advantage being that there is no loss by evaporation, as there is when it is carried in skins; but the disadvantage of the cans is their weight, their liability to crack at the joints, and the difficulty of repairing them in the desert.

“For the first part of our journey we did not take a large supply of water, as the oases are not far apart; hence our ability to threaten to make our purchases elsewhere, when the market was raised upon us. The doctor had already secured consent to carry weapons; as you must understand that no civilian can carry a rifle or revolver in Algeria without permission of the authorities. There was no trouble whatever on this score, as the objects of our expedition were well understood, and any authorization that we wanted was to be had for the asking.

“One of our difficulties was the purchase of horses for riding purposes. We visited the horse-market every

morning, but for several days were unable to find any satisfactory animals, but when Renaud joined us he settled this matter very promptly. As before stated, he was an old cavalry soldier, and was, moreover, thoroughly acquainted in Biskra. He hunted up some horse-owning friends, and succeeded in getting at fair prices three very good animals. We did not expect to be able to keep them with us on our entire journey, but, as the horse is preferable to the camel for riding purposes, we desired to put off the evil days of the camel saddle as long as possible.

“And, now, behold us one bright morning setting out from Biskra on our journey into the Great Sahara. Renaud had a mule for his private riding, and a sturdy beast it was. It had the characteristics of its race fairly well developed; while ordinarily a good-natured and obedient creature, it had occasional fits of stubbornness that detracted from its merits. Every hour or so it would stop short in its footsteps and could not be moved for at least five minutes by any kind of blows whatever, or even by building a fire under it. At the end of its period of rest it would go forward as quietly as ever, as though nothing had happened.

“Sometimes it would allow any one to ride close up to it on horse or camel, while at others it would kick out spitefully before the object of its aversion came within reach. Once a day, at least, it would lie down on the ground — always when its rider was on its back — and, having demonstrated its ability to lie down, would rise again, give a loud bray, and go peacefully onward. You

could never tell what that mule would do next, or when he would do it.

“Sometimes, after a long, hard day’s work, it would indulge in what the Arabs call a ‘fantasia,’ and what Harry denominated a ‘general circus,’ when for the last hour or so it had appeared just able to drag one foot after another. When its saddle was taken off it seized the opportunity to break away, make a circuit of a mile or so, aimed its heels at the moon, if that orb happened to be visible, and kicked out as though trying to hit it. It would lie down, stand on its hind legs, kick, rear, plunge, bray, and perform every other mulish antic known to science. Then it would come back to its owner and submit to be picketed where it belonged.

“Renaud usually led the procession when on the march; we three explorers followed, and then came our string of ten camels, laden with the impedimenta of our expedition. The camel with the water-skins and a part of the provisions was the first of the string; then came the one with the tents, tent-poles, cooking utensils, beds, and our personal every-day belongings. The third in the line was the one that bore the scientific instruments, the ammunition, and spare weapons, and the others were laden with cases of provisions, and also the presents intended for the chiefs of the tribes through whose countries we were to pass. The drivers of the camels, who were generally the owners, walked by the sides of their beasts, or mounted on top of their loads. Most of them did the former, especially if they happened to be the owners of the camels; in their case was exemplified the

truth of the proverb, 'A merciful man is merciful to his beast' — when it is his interest to be so.

"Renaud stayed on the camping ground until the last camel was gone; then he carefully went over the place of encampment and saw that nothing had been left behind. Having performed this duty, he followed the procession until it was well out of Biskra, when he spurred up his mule and came to the front of the column.

"Several French officers and civilians with whom we had become acquainted rode out with us for three or four miles, where we came to a halt for a few minutes; there they bade us good-by, with many expressions of hope for our safety and success, and turned back in the direction of Biskra. We moved slowly on, occasionally looking back at the domed buildings which glistened white among the palm trees.

"We did not intend to make a long march on the first day; in fact, it would have been impossible to do so, however much we had wished it. The camels and horses were slow to settle down to work. The horses, in particular, were hard to manage and indulged in more or less dancing and uneasiness throughout the whole day. The camels were not friendly to one another, and were frequently endeavoring to change places, much to the confusion of the whole procession. One of the loads was not properly arranged on the back of the camel that carried it; it worked loose, and the cases were just beginning to tumble to the ground, when the beast was stopped, and compelled to kneel while his burden was properly adjusted. While the animal was on the ground I went

up to his head and tried to make friends with him. He rewarded my pains by a vicious bite, which I narrowly escaped. The camel is not a good-natured animal, except to his master, and I think he obeys him principally through fear. I've heard of camels showing great affection for their owners and the members of their families, but have never seen an instance of it.

“There is a strange enmity between the horse and the camel, and the doctor says it prevails all the world over. Whenever we tried to ride past our string of camels the horses always seemed to shrink from coming near their long-legged and long-necked rivals, and if a horse happens to be grazing, and a camel comes near him so silently that he is not perceived until close at hand, the horse will jump as though greatly frightened. Doctor Whitney says that a panic can easily be created among horses by bringing a camel into their midst, and he mentioned an instance, somewhere in the New England States, where a horse was so frightened by the presence of a camel belonging to a passing menagerie that he stood for a minute as if paralyzed with fear and then fell dead to the ground.

“We went into camp very early on the first day. Tents were spread, one for ourselves, and one for the manager and his crew; our tent was fourteen feet by ten, and, though a little cramped, was a great deal better than no tent at all. We had a portable table, three camp-stools, and an army camp-chest for four persons, as we expected now and then to entertain a guest. We had heavy water-proof blankets to spread on the ground,

on which to place our beds. These beds were long sacks of sheep-skin, made like Bryan O'Linn's coat, 'with the wooly side in.' The lower portions of the sacks extended a yard or so beyond the upper, and formed a bag at the upper end, in which we placed the clothing we had worn during the day so as to make a pillow, and as the pillow was a part of the bed it was impossible for any one to steal it from under the owner's head while he was sleeping. Altogether, we found our beds very comfortable; they would have been more so if they could have been made proof against fleas and other small but active intruders.

"Just as we went into camp we saw a small troop of gazelles away on the eastern horizon. You may be sure that Harry and I wanted to go in pursuit of them, and had it not been for the doctor we should have done so. We had rifles at our saddle-bows and revolvers at our waist-belts, and felt that we would certainly bring in our game if allowed to pursue it.

"'It would be all nonsense,' said the doctor, 'for you to try to get at those gazelles; they've doubtless been chased by the Arabs time and time again, and would probably enjoy being followed by two foreigners like yourselves. You couldn't get within half a mile of them before they would have taken flight. Later on you'll have a chance at gazelles where they are not so wily as they are here, but don't waste your time and the strength of your horses pursuing them now.'

"Thus warned, we gave up the chase of the gazelles, but we did have some hunting experience, notwithstanding.

Renaud told us that we would find quail in some scattered tussocks of grass, which he indicated a quarter of a mile away. We exchanged our rifles for shotguns, went in the direction indicated, and had the satisfaction of bringing in a dozen birds, which made us an excellent supper. In due time we went to our beds, where we were lulled to sleep by the squealing of the horses and other sounds of the camp. We slept soundly, in spite of the lack of spring-mattresses and other luxuries of city life, and rose in the morning thoroughly refreshed and ready to begin the work of the day."

CHAPTER III.

SALT LAKES OF THE DESERT — A LION HUNT.

“WE had no occasion to draw upon our supply of water,” continued Ned; “in fact, we had taken very little from Biskra, as we expected to find water at various points for several days. Our camp on the first night was made near the Oued Biskra, or Biskra River. At that time it was a small brook through which a child might wade with safety, but the broad and worn channel showed that it was not always in that condition. During the period of rains it swells into a stream of considerable size and is fordable on horseback with considerable difficulty and some little danger. In the narrowest places, in times of flood, the current is very strong and swift, and a horse is liable to be swept off his feet. Wide stretches of the river are then sought for as fording places, as the water is shallow and the current gentle.

“There was considerable delay at starting the next morning, but less so than when setting out from Biskra. It takes three or four days to get everything working smoothly, and sometimes longer, so that camp can be struck and the caravan put in motion early. The camels were loaded and the march began in fairly good time. Harry and I offered to divide some of the work with Renaud; that is, we were to take turns, morning after

morning, in going over the camping ground to see that nothing had been left behind. We thought it would be a good piece of the experiences of desert travel, and add a little variety to our occupation. So from that time on the work was laid out in that way, but on nearly every morning when it was my turn to inspect the ground Harry remained with me, and when his turn of duty came I remained with him. At Dr. Whitney's suggestion, Harry and I took turns in keeping the journal of the expedition, but almost every day the doctor added something to what we had written and made it more interesting. On the road where other travelers had gone before we did not attempt to make observations, except for practice; hardly a day passed that we did not make use of our instruments, and it was not long before we felt entire confidence in being able to find our latitude and longitude, no matter where we might be.

“The distance from Biskra to Tuggurt is about one hundred and forty miles; we travelled from twenty-five to thirty miles a day, so that our journey lasted five days. For a considerable part of the way the ground is covered with scrubby bushes, on which the camels feed. They pick up most of their living while traveling along the route, browsing here and there on the shrubbery as they walk along. Naturally they make slow progress when browsing, and we became somewhat impatient in consequence, but if we had compelled them to go forward without feeding as they went it would have been necessary to feed them on barley, or dates, or something of the sort when we halted for the night, and this would involve buy-

ing and carrying those articles of camel food which are not to be found in the desert.

“We had some bags of barley for the horses’ feed, and whenever we could do so at the palm oases, we bought dates for ourselves as well as for our horses. Dates are universal food in the desert; camels grow fat on them when the supply is sufficient and horses do likewise. Dogs live upon dates, donkeys luxuriate on them, and last, though not least, men find them a staple article.

“The dates of the Sahara are the best in the world, and all our party lived largely upon them. An Arab no more gets weary of living upon dates than an East Indian does of living upon rice. The white man’s appetite is more variable than that of the Arab, but even he does not find it cloyed very easily by this desert food. An old adage says, ‘Hunger is the best sauce,’ and there is no place where this ancient saw is better illustrated than in desert travel. The pure air which one breathes and the exercise of travel are sufficient of themselves to create a good appetite, and whenever food of any kind is obtainable it is sure to be welcome.

“As we pressed forward towards the south the mountains to the north of Biskra grew dim in the distance. Harry and I wanted very much to visit the famous salt mountain which lies to the north and east of Biskra, and is one of the five mountains of salt mentioned by Herodotus. We had seen it on our way from Batna to Biskra, but time did not permit our making a journey to it. For hundreds of years it has been a source of supply for the Arabs, and now that the railway to Biskra has been com-

pleted it will probably be drawn upon by the French for the use of the northern part of Algeria.

“It is what its name implies,—a mountain of salt, a great mass of bluish rock-salt, about fifteen hundred feet high, and has evidently been forced up from below. The salt is not sufficiently pure to be used on the table without refining, but it can be given to cattle or used for the preservation of meat in just the condition that we find it. It is at the end of a range of lime-stone mountains, and as we looked at it from a distance, it appeared much lighter in color than its neighbors. With the sun shining upon it at a certain angle from the observer, it sparkles and glistens so that a credulous person might be led to believe that it was a mountain of diamonds or glass, rather than a great mass of very commonplace salt.

“I think it was about fifty miles south of Biskra that we lost sight of the range of mountains which includes this mountain of salt. We had traversed an undulating plain, which suddenly came to an end at a low ridge, from the top of which we looked upon a great widespread plain, which is known as the plain of the *Oued Ghir*; off to the left was a lake, and a lake of considerable size it was, as it is nearly 200 miles in length. This lake is known as Chott Melghir. The *Oued Ghir*, or Ghir River, is a stream similar to the *Oued Biskra*, and along its course are several *chotts*, or lakes, which it connects with the great one. The water of these lakes is strongly impregnated with salt, and that of the largest, Chott Melghir, is more salt than the sea. There are a few springs of sweet water along the route usually traveled, but in most places

water is obtained from artesian wells made by the French. In nearly every instance the water thus obtained nourishes a small oasis, which either existed before in a partially dried up condition, or has been wholly created as a product of the wells.

“In the middle of the afternoon, or perhaps a little past the middle, we came near one of the little lakes of the Oued Ghir, and saw with our glasses that it abounded with ducks, flamingoes, and other aquatic birds. Harry suggested that it would be well to encamp in that neighborhood, and thus have a chance at duck shooting. The doctor consented, and after a consultation with Renaud it was arranged that camp would be formed a mile or two further on, and Harry and I could start off immediately on our horses, accompanied by an Arab on foot, to try our hands at duck shooting.

“With great alacrity, Harry got out the shotguns, and we started off; when we were about half a mile away from the lake I suggested that we load our guns, as the birds might possibly rise and fly over us. As I said so, a blank and pained look came over Harry’s face, and I asked:—

“‘What’s the matter, Harry?’

“‘I declare,’ he answered, ‘I’ve forgotten the cartridges.’

“‘We can’t shoot ducks without cartridges,’ I suggested. ‘We might scare them and make them fly somewhere else, but that’s all.’

“‘Hold on a bit,’ said Harry. ‘I’ll ride back and get them; as I forgot them, it’s my business to get the cartridges here as soon as possible.’

“Harry rode at a gallop, and in due time (he was gone about an hour) he came back with a good supply of ammunition. We rode as near the edge of the lake as we dared, and then, leaving the horses in care of the Arab, we went on foot, — no, not exactly on foot, but on all fours, and also on our bellies. There was a fine flock of ducks feeding close to the shore, and we managed to get within easy range of them, but we had a long and disagreeable crawl to do so.

“We were side by side and not more than four feet apart when Harry whispered to me to get ready.

“‘You aim a little to the right of the center of the group,’ whispered Harry; ‘and I’ll aim in the same way towards the left. That will give us the best chance of bagging something.’

“‘All right,’ I answered; ‘give the word.’

“‘Fire!’ said Harry, still in a whisper, and our guns banged away.

“‘Give ’em the other barrel as they rise,’ said Harry, suiting the action to the word, and I followed him.

“We had to be our own retrievers; we stripped off our clothing, dashed into the water, and managed to collect altogether six of the birds of the pin-tail variety. I do not think that the water anywhere was more than a few inches above our knees, so that we ran no risk. Harry suggested that possibly there might be alligators in the lake. I answered that I had never heard of alligators in that section, but all the same I quickened my pace in returning to the shore, and so did Harry.

“The ducks were in good condition and served us

admirably for supper and breakfast. The pin-tail duck is not the best of his kind, but the doctor remarked that he was vastly better than no duck at all.

“ ‘In other words,’ added the doctor, ‘he beats nothing all out of sight.’

“From hunting we naturally turned our attention to fishing, and a fishing excursion in the lake was suggested. I asked Renaud if the fishing was good in Chott Melghir, or in the smaller chotts.

“ ‘Oh, yes, ze fishing be very good ; but zer be no fish. You fish and fish all ze da’, but zer is nothing for you to catch.’

“Then he explained that there were no fish in the chotts, the water being too brackish for them. He said that in places where springs of pure water abounded small fish were abundant, but nobody seemed to care for them ; they never grow to a respectable size, and when cooked are decidedly tasteless.

“By the time our duck hunt was finished and we had returned the camp had been formed, and when our supper was announced we were quite ready for it. All retired early, as everybody was tired and ready for sleep. We had hardly settled down to our rest, and I don’t think I had fairly closed my eyes, when I was aroused by an unearthly howl ; it seemed to me to be close to the camp, and was something between the wailing of a baby and the howl of a dog. I sprang up, and up came Harry at the same moment. The light had been extinguished, but we could make out each other’s forms against the canvas of the tent.

“ ‘What’s that terrible noise?’ I said to Harry.

“ ‘I don’t know, I’m sure,’ he answered.

“ We talked in a whisper, as we did not wish to disturb the doctor, who appeared to be sound asleep; but he wasn’t asleep at all, as the sequel proved. At our question and reply, he spoke, without moving from his place, and said:—

“ ‘That’s all right, boys, nothing but jackals. Lie down and go to sleep.’

“ ‘Thank you,’ I answered; Harry echoed my words, and we nestled down again into our beds.

“ But we did not go to sleep immediately; the noise continued, and it grew worse and worse; it seemed to me as if half of the jackals in Algeria had gathered there to serenade us. I guessed that there were twenty of them, at least, but would have been more inclined to place the number at fifty than at twenty. Renaud told us the next day that there were no more than two of them, and the chances were even that it was only a solitary jackal which had made all the disturbance.

“ The jackal abounds in nearly all parts of the Sahara, and how he lives is a mystery. He hangs around the camps of the caravans, and when a caravan is on the march there is usually a small troupe of jackals following it to pick up any extra trifle which is eatable. Very little comes amiss to the jackal; he is fond of fresh steaks and chops, but an old boot or shoe is acceptable, and he frequently steals a man’s boots from under his head at night, if they have been so placed that they can be easily taken away. For that reason, one wants to place his boots along

with his day clothing in the bag at the end of his bed, so that the unwelcome visitor will have to make a great deal of disturbance before being able to secure anything. If a horse or camel falls and dies in the desert the jackals seem to spring out of the ground, or drop from the skies, for the purpose of devouring the unfortunate animal. They even begin their work upon him before he is fairly dead, though they generally wait until life is extinct before proceeding to tear his flesh. They gather in such numbers that the bones of the unfortunate beast are picked clean in a very few hours. If he has the opportunity to do so, the jackal gorges himself to such a degree that he needs no food for several days to come.

“An hour or so before daylight the noise suddenly came to an end, and there was a lively stamping, and squealing, and tugging at their tethers on the part of our horses, and also a commotion among the camels. The whole camp was aroused; all three of us were awake, and, slipping on our clothes, we hastily came out of our tent to ascertain the cause of the trouble. The first man we encountered was Renaud, who was trying to soothe our horses, that were evidently very greatly alarmed. We asked him what was the matter, and he answered:—

“‘A lion! a lion!’

“Immediately we went to get our rifles, determined to give a warm reception to any lion that dared to enter the camp. I remarked to the doctor that it would be just as well for the lion to remain where he was.

“‘There’s little danger of his coming into the camp,’ said the doctor, ‘now that we’re up and about. He will

see us long before we can see him, and will be pretty sure to keep out of danger. He has been looking out for a chance to jump on one of the horses when everything was quiet. No men were visible, and he drove the jackals away as he crept near us; that is what caused the noise to cease.'

" 'Then the howling of the jackal is an assurance that no danger is near; is it not?' questioned Harry.

" 'Yes, that's so,' said the doctor; 'as long as you hear the howl of the jackal you may be sure that there are no lions about.'

" 'I remember now,' said Harry, 'that travelers on the western plains of the United States regard the wolves as their friends, in spite of the depredations they commit. Wolves come near the camps and howl all night, and as long as the howling is kept up the travelers know that there are no Indians about, but if it stops, it indicates that redskins are prowling around the camp, and puts the white men on their guard. Evidently the jackals are first cousins of the American wolves, and serve the traveler in the same way.'

" 'You're quite right,' said the doctor; 'the jackals here take the place of the American coyotes, and their manners and habits are very much the same. But keep a sharp eye out; I don't believe the lion has gone away from us; he will keep up his watch as long as there is any chance of making anything by it.'

" 'We were encamped on a little slope of ground, so that the ridge lay between us and the eastern horizon; at the doctor's suggestion, we spread out about one hundred yards

apart, so as to keep the ridge in view, in the hope that the lion would pass along it and thus give us a shot at him about the time daylight appeared. He was an accommodating lion and did just what we wanted. When the first light was breaking in the eastern skies, the beast, in making a circuit around the camp, crawled along the top of the ridge, and the keen eyes of the doctor caught his outline defined against the horizon. Calculating his distance as well as he could, he took careful aim and fired. There was a loud roar, and then all was silent.

“Harry and I quickly came to where the doctor stood. Of course we suggested that we would go immediately and ascertain the result of the shot.

“‘Wait a moment,’ said the doctor; ‘don’t be too hasty. A dead lion sometimes comes to life again and makes ugly work of his assailants; it is too dark yet to make anything out with certainty. We’ll wait for daylight before we make an investigation. Meantime take your places again; there may be a chance for another shot.’

“‘We went back to our places and resumed our vigil. Daylight was a long time coming; it seemed to me that it was never so tardy in its movements. It came at last and gave us cause for rejoicing. On the crest of the ridge we could make out the form of the lion lying there, apparently dead. Renaud offered to go and see if the creature was really dead; provided the doctor would lend him a rifle, which, of course, he readily did.

“Renaud cocked the weapon and went forward slowly and cautiously. He said he had hunted the lion in the



"CALCULATING HIS DISTANCE AS WELL AS HE COULD, HE TOOK CAREFUL AIM."

regions of the Atlas Mountains, and found him to be a beast whom no man could trust.

“‘He will lie apparently dead,’ said Renaud, ‘and when you go up to him and prod him with the end of your rifle he springs up, gives a loud roar, and jumps upon you. He’s never to be trusted, and when you approach a dead lion you should never be in a hurry.’

“Renaud asked two or three of the Arabs to go with him, but they all declined, saying that they had to attend to their animals, or do some other pressing work. So he went alone and found, on reaching the beast, that he was quite dead, the bullet having gone through his heart. We took the skin of the lion and preserved it as a trophy, leaving the flesh to the jackals. Renaud said that he had eaten lion steaks, and they were very good when you could get no other kind of meat.

“The lion does not properly belong to the Sahara Desert. He inhabits the territory north of the Atlas Mountains, and was quite numerous there at one time, as mentioned in the first chapter of this volume. He wanders occasionally into the northern part of the Sahara Desert, but whether he does so from a desire to see more of the world, or to satisfy his hunger, no one can say positively. If for the latter reason, he would do better to stay in the Tell, as the country there is more densely populated, and there are flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, not to mention pigs and chickens, on which he can live very comfortably. He commits depredations on the farms of the Arabs and French settlers, and is regarded as a great nuisance. The French Government used to pay, and still

pays, a bounty on his head, provided he is killed within the limits of the colony. He has been pursued so vigorously that his numbers have greatly diminished, and there is consequently much less complaint of his depredations.

“The Arabs entrap the lion after a way of their own, which used to be very effective. In fact, they have several ways of trapping the beast. One of the most popular of these is to make two circles of stout stakes, one within the other. In the space enclosed by the inner circle of stakes a kid or goat is fastened. There is no gate through the inner circle, but there is through the outer one, and it opens inwardly.

“The lion is attracted by the bleating of the goat, and after approaching the circle and making sure that there are no men in the vicinity, he passes through the gate. The space between the rows of stakes is just enough to admit him comfortably. He enters and passes around the circle, and when he comes to the gate he pushes against it and closes it. The gate has a self-acting latch and when closed it fastens itself. By the time the lion passes twice around the circle he discovers that he has been trapped. He makes desperate efforts to escape, but the trap is so constructed that escape is impossible. He gives vent to his rage by terrific howling, thereby notifying the Arabs of his capture. They come with spears, and after reviling him as a thief, a coward, and everything else that is bad, they thrust their weapons through the outer paling and despatch him. If lions are numerous they remove the carcass at once and set the trap again.

“Another mode of trapping lions is to dig a deep hole

in the ground, and set in the bottom of it a row of stakes with sharp points sticking upwards. The hole is ten or twelve feet square, and about eight feet deep; it is covered with a light layer of bushes and reeds and a kid is fastened in the center of the covering. The covering around the center where the kid is tied is sufficiently strong to support the little creature, but no stronger. The lion is attracted as in the other case. When within a dozen feet or so he makes a sudden spring, crashes through the covering of the pit, and goes down upon the sharp stakes ready to receive him. He is usually impaled by them, but if not impaled, it is impossible for him to escape, and death speedily follows his discovery by the Arabs.

“There was no use in our going to bed again, for the reason that it was very near our usual time of rising, and even had we gone to bed the excitement of the morning would have prevented us from getting a wink of sleep. So we told Renaud to hurry up matters as much as he could and we would get away from camp in good season. We breakfasted on the ducks which were left over from supper, together with a cup of coffee, some hard bread, and some dates, and were under way quite early.

“On this day we came among the sand hills, the first of them being quite steep, and leading the way over a table-land to the lower ground near the chotts. The air of midday was very hot, but the heat was tempered by a cooling wind blowing from the surface of the lakes. Harry and I were very much interested in the sand hills, which were unlike anything we had before seen. They

are great mounds of sand, resembling immense haystacks, such as you see in the farmer's field in the summer-time, except that their sides were more sloping, and were blown by the winds into the shape in which we found them. They are not very close together as we first enter their region, but are more thickly formed as the traveler goes further south. They are an impressive sight when one first beholds them, but get very tiresome as time and the traveler go on.

“We made our noonday halt at a little oasis containing about a dozen palms and a small spring of water. Our horses were eager to reach the spring and seemed to scent the water a good mile away. Harry's horse and mine had a kicking match as we neared the spring, and a match that was very inconvenient for us, as both were in the saddle at the time. The horses let out freely with their hind feet, and it was a wonder that both of us escaped injury from their heels. The quarrel did not last long, as we used our best efforts to get the animals away from each other as soon as possible. We punished them by compelling them to wait for water until all the other animals had had their fill, but whether our moral instruction had any effect on them I am unable to say.

“While riding along the road in the afternoon I got into conversation with one of our Arabs, who spoke about as much French as I did of Arabic, and in the combined languages we managed to get on very well. Somehow the talk drifted around to the Arab's ability to tell falsehoods, and I asked him how he accounted for it. His answer, which I will render into commonplace English, in-

stead of the polyglot in which he gave it, was about as follows : —

“ ‘ A very long time ago the Father of All Evil came to the earth with nine bagfuls of lies. There had never been any lying before in the world, as nobody knew how to speak anything but the truth. He scattered one bagful over Asia, and in the evening came to Suez, intending to go the next day into Africa, and after that into Europe. While he slept that night the Arabs stole and divided among themselves the contents of the other eight bags, and that is why they’re such awful liars as you find them.’ ”

“ I told him that there were people in Europe and America who did not always tell the truth, and asked him how he accounted for that, if His Satanic Majesty had lost all his stock in trade in the manner described.”

“ ‘ Oh,’ he answered, ‘ there have been a good many Europeans and Americans traveling in Arabian countries : they must have picked up the habit, and taken it home with them.’ ”

“ I thought he was becoming sarcastic and therefore changed the subject.

“ We spent a night at Maghais, which is a village built of sundried bricks and surrounded by a mud wall. There is a large oasis of date palms close to it, and we camped at the edge of the oasis and close to the village. The sheikh of the village, on learning of our arrival, sent to invite us to spend the night at his house, but as we would be quite as comfortable in our tent as in his dwelling, and moreover wished to be with our people and animals, we declined his invitation.

“ Harry and I wanted to accept it, out of curiosity, but the doctor said that we would have plenty to satisfy our longings in that direction. If we had stayed with the sheikh he would have shown us every hospitality that his house could afford, and treated us as guests or visitors. When we left in the morning he would have expected a present, as a matter of course, but would not demand it.”

CHAPTER IV.

PHENOMENA OF THE DESERT — ARAB HORSES.

THE party made a good start from their camp on the following morning, much to the satisfaction of the doctor and his young companions. During the forenoon Ned saw with his telescope some flocks of ducks resting in the water of a chott off to the left of their route; of course the youths wanted to go in pursuit of them, but the doctor put a veto on their proposal, saying that it was too near the middle of the day to make any violent exertion, and also somewhat hazardous to stray from the line of march at that particular time. Furthermore, the ground between them and the lake was sandy and progress over it would be very slow, and, also, very severe upon the horses.

The idea of the duck hunt was, therefore, abandoned, and the line of march was not broken.

The caravan halted a little past noon on the edge of a pond which looked very inviting, but the water proved to be too brackish to be palatable, at least, for men, although the camels and horses did not hesitate to drink it.

“We came in sight of this pond,” said Harry in his note book, “from a high sand hill, and very pretty did it appear, surrounded as it is by the desert sands in every direction. The banks of the pond are fringed with rushes

of a brilliant green color, and nearly one half of its surface is covered by aquatic plants. I am inclined to believe that the rich green of the vegetation is partly due to the contrast of the surroundings. If the pond were placed in the middle of a grass-covered prairie it would have appeared far less brilliant than we found it. Renaud told us that the Arabs call it "The Diamond in the Desert," and I can readily understand why they gave it this fanciful name."

So inviting was the scene that our friends were unwilling to leave it, but the rules of travel required them to do so when the time of their halt had expired. The horses had improved the opportunity to refresh themselves wherever they could find grass for doing so, as they greatly preferred this article of food to dried barley. The camels, on the contrary, did not care particularly for grass and continued to browse on the bushes which overspread the ground here and there as if struggling for existence.

During the day several small oases were passed, and one of considerable size, called Ourlana, whose existence is largely dependent on an artesian well which has steadily poured out a large volume of water ever since it was bored. There was a village on the side of the oasis, but our friends did not stop there, as it was too early in the day to form camp. They pushed on several miles further to Tamerna, where there is a good-sized village built of mud, like most of the villages in this part of the country. Renaud told the youths that they would find in the center of the village the ruins of a building of cut stone which was supposed to date from the time of the Romans.

When the camp was formed and the camels had been relieved of their loads, Ned and Harry rode into the village to inspect the ruin. They found, as Renaud had told them, that it was constructed of hewn stone and must have been an imposing edifice when it was completed. It was circular in form and rested on arcades, and certainly everything about it indicated that it was very old.

"I wonder what the natives say about it," said Harry, "or if they have any traditions as to its origin."

"We must ask Renaud about it when we get back to camp," answered Ned; "he may be able to tell us something about it."

It was agreed that Renaud should be consulted on this point, and with this understanding the boys, after a careful inspection of the village, rode back to their camping place.

In reply to their questions Renaud said that he had interrogated the natives frequently, but could never learn anything from them.

"They say it's old, very old, and that's all they know about it."

Ned and Harry fell to wondering how far the Romans had pushed their conquest into Africa, and when they sat down to dinner they questioned the doctor on the subject.

"I'm unable to tell you exactly on that point," the doctor answered. "Roman remains are found in this part of Africa, two or three hundred miles from the coast, and sometimes at greater distances. The indications are that the country, two thousand years ago, was more productive than it is now,—that is, there was a much larger supply

of water, and consequently more fertility than there is to-day. Many dried up oases are scattered about and a goodly number of them have been dried up for a very long time. You have seen enough to convince you that water is everything, and without it no living thing can exist.

“With an abundance of water, every part of the desert, with the exception of places covered by shifting sands, could be made fertile, and a great many projects have been formed for supplying it. It has been proposed to make tunnels at certain places in the hills and mountains, and bring into the desert rivers which now flow into the Mediterranean, but the volume of these rivers is so small that it would not reclaim a sufficient amount of soil to pay the cost of making the tunnels. Another plan has been to cut a canal from the Mediterranean at the Gulf of Gabes, to let in the water and flood the desert in the portion that is below the level of the sea.”

“I should think,” Harry interposed, as the doctor paused, “that the formation of the lake would destroy a good many oases that now exist, would it not?”

“Certainly it would,” was the reply. “A great area on which there are productive oases would be flooded, some of it to the depth of three hundred feet. And probably the fertility caused by the admission of the water would not be much greater, if any, than the amount destroyed.”

“I’ve read something about that,” said Ned. “The proposition to flood the low-lying part of the Sahara was made about thirty years ago. The objections to it were the great cost and the doubtfulness of the advantages of

the work. It was also feared that the creation of a lake here in Africa would change the climate of Southern France, and make it as cold as Paris, and possibly Berlin. The Riviera, as the southern coast of France is called, is warm at all seasons of the year. It is too warm there in summer for comfortable residence, but the warmth makes the vegetation push with great vigor. The ground is very fruitful and fertile, and produces abundantly. The winter climate is delicious, and many thousands of people go there in the winter for health, comfort, or pleasure. With a lake created here, the dry and warm winds that blow over the Mediterranean would be moistened and chilled, and the Riviera would lose its charms,—at least, such is the fear, and I don't believe the French will be in any hurry to create that lake."

"No more do I," said the doctor; "it will be many a long year before they undertake it. If we had a lake here now it might be convenient for us, as we could load our entire train on boats and navigate a considerable distance on our way to the south."

This closed the dialogue on the subject. The rest of the evening was passed in a disjointed conversation, of which we have no record. The sleepers were not disturbed either by jackals or lions during the night, nor did the villagers intrude themselves upon the notice of the strangers.

The next day's march was a trying one for the horses, as the sands were more loose and shifting than any that the travelers had yet encountered. The camels got along much more easily than the horses, as their feet are

adapted to traveling in loose sands. The camel's foot is a somewhat ill-shapen mass of spongy material, with claws or toes upon it which seem to be set very carelessly in the soft material. When lifted in the air the foot collapses, and somewhat resembles a closed fist. When it goes down upon the ground it spreads and covers a considerable surface. A novice, looking at the foot, would be justified in believing that it would go to pieces in the next hour or two, but it doesn't do anything of the sort; it goes on and on, and by spreading out it supports its owner to some extent on the surface of the sand, where the small and hard hoof of the horse sinks into it. Thus it is that camels walk with ease where horses go with great difficulty.

Both the youths tried to get on amiable terms with their steeds, but they found that the animals were not inclined to form new friendships very easily. Harry talked to his horse, telling him that he ought to be proud of being an Arab steed, which was reputed to be the finest kind of horse in the world.

"You are not," said Harry, "the sort that we see in pictures, bounding over the ground with a white-clad rider on your back, and going faster than the wind can blow, and the pictures of Arabian steeds that we have in books, do not resemble you one bit. But never mind a trifle like that; you're an Arabian horse nevertheless, and we'll take good care of you as long as you take good care of us."

The horse responded to these endearments by endeavoring to lie down and roll his young rider in the sand, but the latter pulled on the bridle, and in other ways convinced

the animal that it was not the proper place just then for lying down.

In the deepest sands Harry and Ned dismounted, and in trying to walk they realized what laborious work it was for their poor steeds. The doctor suggested that after leaving Tuggurt they would alternate between horses and camels, and when they next moved out of camp they would have saddles placed on the camels and be ready to occupy them when necessary.

In the afternoon, on rising to the crest of a sand ridge, they beheld Tuggurt standing out conspicuously on the brow of a hill, its domes and turrets forming a marked contrast to the deep green of the mass of palm trees beyond it. As before stated, the oasis of Tuggurt contains four hundred thousand date palms, and a considerable area is occupied by gardens. These gardens produce three crops a year of pumpkins, melons, carrots, beans, lentils, beets, and similar products of the soil. Great attention is given to their cultivation, and the abundance of never-failing water with which the place is supplied makes the gardens a sure reliance for their owners.

The horses and camels of our friends' caravan seemed to realize that they were approaching a resting place when they neared the white walls of Tuggurt. Ned declared that his horse pricked up his ears and looked wistfully towards the gate, and his actions were imitated by the other horses. All three of them quickened their steps, and the camels did likewise, but whether they were simply following the example of the horses or were acting on their own account the youths were unable to determine.

The doctor suggested that the animals were probably incited by the smell of the good things abounding in the oasis, and also that they had quite likely been there before and were reviving their recollections. Ned asked Yusef's opinion on the subject, but the wily Arab was decidedly non-committal in his answer.

Renaud took the camels to the camping ground outside the town, and close to the edge of the oasis, while the three travelers passed through the gateway, and entered within the walls. There was quite a crowd at the gate, and Ned remarked that it was a very mixed one. He was unable to classify the various people with exactness, but noticed that the faces of the Arabs were generally of a darker hue than those he had seen in the regions north of the Atlas Mountains. This state of affairs was natural enough, in view of the higher temperature of the Sahara and the blinding and dazzling rays of the desert sun. There were negroes, Jews, and other varieties of people, and their costumes were, on the whole, made up of brighter colors than those of Biskra or Constantine.

Immediately after entering the gate the party passed through the market-place, which was at that time deserted; going there the next morning, they found it full of people who seemed to be actively engaged in doing very little. Merchandise was piled on the ground, and many of the stocks in trade were very small.

"There were negro and Arab women," Ned wrote in his journal, "sitting behind little piles of cucumbers, melons, carrots, and other vegetables whose entire value could not have been more than twenty-five cents. They

seemed indifferent as to whether they made a trade or not, and if they sold out their entire stock they were supremely happy. Harry and I went to the market, accompanied by Yusef, partly out of curiosity, and partly with the intention of buying some carrots for our horses. We found the merchandise that we wanted, and, for a franc, sent Yusef back to camp with as many carrots as he could carry. We were told that the prices of commodities are usually left to the dealers, but whenever any large caravans arrive, and especially a military detachment, the natives take advantage of the circumstances and demand exorbitant prices; then the government steps in, regulates the tariff, and placards it everywhere in French and Arabic. The prices fixed by the government are a trifle higher than the ordinary rates, and thus everybody is satisfied; or, at any rate, the purchaser is and the seller is obliged to be."

"Tuggurt has a population of about seven thousand natives," continued Ned, "but only a few dozen of foreigners, exclusive of the military garrison, which usually consists of about two hundred men. The officers are almost invariably French, and most of them have one or two French soldiers as personal servants. The rank and file of the garrison consist of Turcos and Spahis, who are recruited from among the natives of the northern part of Algeria.

"The different varieties of inhabitants in Tuggurt have their own particular quarters in the city. There is an Arab quarter, a Jewish quarter, and a negro quarter, and some of these are again sub-divided. There is a large colony of Hebrews which has been there for hun-

dreds of years; its members are famous throughout the Sahara as the best jewelers and workers of gold and silver. We visited their workshops and found them so numerous as to occupy two or three streets.

“Their mode of working is very primitive, and, in view of the tools they use, the products they turn out are really marvelous. A few pliers and other things known everywhere to the jeweler suffice for manipulation. Each shop has its furnace, which is generally a box twelve or fifteen inches square, filled with earth, having two stones placed upon it. On one side is the fire, and on the other the bellows that keeps up the blaze. The bellows consists of a goatskin with the legs tied tight and the head inserted between the stones. The hinder part of the goatskin is open, and by means of two sticks which are attached to it a boy manipulates the bellows and keeps up a respectable blaze.

“The jewelers seemed quite indifferent as to whether we bought anything or not, and some of them kept on at their work, not attempting to show their goods or even deigning to look at us. We went to their synagogue, which was a tumble-down sort of a building, just back of their quarter of the city. Service was going on at the time, and seemed to be a very perfunctory sort of business. Evidently there is not much education among these Hebrews of Tuggurt, as very few of them speak anything but Arabic, and most of their rabbis do not understand the Hebrew that they read in the service; they go through it by rote, just as a parrot goes through the sentences that he utters.

“In another part of the city there is a small colony or sect of sixty or seventy families, whose features are entirely Jewish. They have light complexions, and in many cases blonde hair, but, instead of adhering to the old Jewish religion, they are all Moslems, and devout ones, too. They are said to be Hebrews who settled here hundreds of years ago, and adopted the Moslem religion, with the Koran as their Bible. They are not very clear as to their history, but claim that they came here long before the people who inhabit the Jewish quarter. They never intermarry with any other sect, tribe, or people, and never show an inclination to wander about the country. They are known as the Beni Mansour, and, taken for all in all, they are a singular people.”

The travelers decided to remain a few days at Tuggurt, partly to rest the animals, as well as themselves, and, partly for completing their stock of supplies, in view of the long and hard journey they had before them. During their halt the youths looked about the city and the surrounding regions, and diligently kept up their journals.

They visited the principal mosques of Tuggurt, and Ned made note that there were twenty mosques in all, some of them well preserved, and some in a very ruinous condition. One of these which was tottering to decay has a sad history. It belonged to the Mozabites, a tribe of enterprising and peace-loving people of whom we shall have more to say. The Mozabites at one time occupied a third of the city of Tuggurt, and the principal commercial business of the place was in their hands. All the other

Arabs hated them and their branch of the Moslem religion. A little less than two hundred years ago a conspiracy was formed against the Mozabites, and one day, while they were worshipping in their mosques and were without arms, the others fell upon them and slaughtered them down to the last man. Since that time no Mozabite has lived in Tuggurt, and the mosque where this people once worshipped has fallen to decay.

The youths visited the Great Mosque, which is on one side of the square, and is a handsome stone building with a tall tower distinct from the building itself. A curious ornament of the building is a large German clock which stands by the side of the pulpit and has Arabic figures on its dial plate. The dome is handsomely ornamented and the interior of the building is a fine specimen of tile work. Our friends were considerably surprised to find such a handsome building so far in the desert, and still more surprised to find that portions of it are supposed to be more than one thousand years old.

The extent of the oasis and the great number of date palms in it give it an enormous production of dates. Great quantities of these are consumed in Tuggurt and the surrounding regions; what is left after the local demand is satisfied is shipped to more distant markets. Part of the exportation is by camels in the direction of Tunis, while the rest go to Phillipville, whence they are shipped to Marseilles and other Mediterranean ports. The French Government talks of pushing the railway further into the desert, and if this should be done it will not be many years before it reaches Tuggurt; then there will be a great

demand for the dates of the Sahara, which are among the best in the world.

There are a good many marshes and small lakes around Tuggurt, and they are generally swarming with aquatic birds of various kinds. Ned and Harry went out on a shooting expedition, but found the birds so wary that they failed to bag anything. They wondered at the shyness of these birds as compared with the tameness of the ducks that they shot, as already mentioned, until Ned happened to think that probably the French officers were fond of hunting and kept the inhabitants of the neighboring lakes and marshes in a constant state of watchfulness.

Harry dropped on a bit of information which struck him as rather curious. While walking through the market, one day, accompanied by Renaud, the latter called his attention to the carcasses of dogs, neatly skinned and dressed, and hung up for sale.

"Surely those can't be dogs," said Harry, "as the Moslems consider the dog an unclean beast and wouldn't eat him."

"I don't know who eats this meat," said Renaud, "but one thing is certain, and that is, they fatten dogs here just as they might fatten sheep or pigs, and sell them in the market. I've known Frenchmen to eat them as a substitute for mutton, which is very scarce and dear all through this country. I've been told that the Mozabites ate dogs; anyway, they are not as straight-laced as the ordinary Moslems, and perhaps it was on that account that they were slaughtered in their mosque, which you know about."

Ned made some observations in regard to the water supply through the region of which Tuggurt is the center. In regard to it, he wrote as follows :—

“There is no river and hardly a stream worthy the name of brook in all the Oued Ghir district, which measures about one hundred miles each way. There are not many natural springs, but all over it, or, rather, under it, there seems to be a stratum that never fails to yield water. For hundreds of years they have been obtaining water all through this district on a principle almost identical with that of the artesian well. The way they do it is very simple; they dig a hole in the ground about eighteen inches in diameter, just large enough for one man to be lowered down by means of ropes under his armpits. He puts planks at the sides of the hole as he descends so as to prevent the earth from falling in upon him. With a rude spade in his hand he manages to dig up the earth at the bottom, and shovels it into a basket to be hoisted up. When he finds the soil beginning to moisten he gets ready for a sudden flow of water, and a half dozen strong-armed men station themselves at the top, ready to pull him up rapidly when the signal comes. By and by he strikes his spade down and the water gushes forth as from the hose of a fire engine. As quickly as possible he is drawn to the top, but so great is the rush of water that not infrequently the man is drowned before he can reach the surface.”

All preparations having been made, and three new camels added to the caravan, our friends once more took up their line of march to the south. Doctor Whitney was

true to his promise, and the new camels were equipped with saddles for riding purposes. The youths found that the camel saddle is materially different from the saddle used on the horse, and Ned thus describes it:—

“It is a sort of dish in which you sit; there is a high pommel, which is quite small as it starts from the edge of the dish and enlarges as it goes upwards. It is ten or twelve inches high and very convenient to hang things upon, and also for the novice to hang on to. The camel is made to kneel and after you get securely in your place, crossing your legs around the pommel, and holding on to it, the signal is given for the beast to rise. Rising is a jerky piece of business, as the camel gives a lunge forward, then backward, then forward again, as though he would shoot you out from your place. When he gets on his feet you can take breath, and as long as he stands still breathing is not a matter of difficulty, but when he starts forward you realize painfully that you are not on the back of a horse. Walking is endurable, and barely so, as it is a kind of corkscrew motion, which sends you forward and backward, over and over again, as long as the animal is in motion. But when he quickens his pace to a trot, then—Oh! my!

“Imagine that you are being tossed in a blanket, or mounted on the back of a genuine American bucking horse; you are tossed up and down until it seems as though every joint in your body was disjoined, and every vertebral bone had set up for itself and made a permanent secession from the rest. We only rode our camels for an hour or so on the first day, and were so stiff that

night that we had hard work undressing and getting to bed. But there's nothing like being used to a thing ; the Arabs spend the greater part of their lives traveling over the desert, and they are no more disturbed by the motion of the camel than we are by that of a railway car."

The first town of consequence on the route of our friends was Temacin, about fifteen miles to the southwest of Tuggurt. On the way to it and not far from Tuggurt, the caravan passed near a salt lake whose borders were covered with a dense growth of rushes and other aquatic plants, and whose surface was well stocked with water-fowl. Harry and Ned, accompanied by Yusef, renewed their shooting experience at this lake, and with better success than at Tuggurt, as they brought in four ducks, which were fat and plump and made an excellent dinner for themselves and the doctor.

CHAPTER V.

DESERT GARDENS — HUNTING THE LEOPARD AND OSTRICHES.

WHILE on the route in the afternoon, our friends met a party of some fifteen or twenty natives, who were not at all prepossessing in appearance. Some were on foot and some rode upon camels. Eight or ten of them had matchlock or flintlock guns, and the others had pistols whose butts protruded at their waists. They seemed to be surveying the caravan and balancing in their minds whether it was worth their while to attack it. Evidently they did not like the appearance of the breech-loading rifles carried by our friends, as they went on in silence, making no demonstration either of hostility or friendship. Renaud spoke to one of them, but the conversation was brief. As soon as the strangers had passed, Ned asked Renaud who and what they were.

“They are Chaamba,” said Renaud, with an angry toss of his head in their direction.

“And they’re evidently not the kind of people we want to know,” said Ned.

“Yes,” replied Renaud; “we don’t want to know them at all; they are robbers and live by robbery or very nearly so. Just now they are too near the French lines to make any serious trouble, though if we had been a

small party and unarmed, they would not have hesitated about plundering us. I've been in their hands two or three times, and the circumstances were such that I couldn't hit back. They robbed me of everything I had except the clothes on my back, and sometimes they don't even leave a man anything to cover himself with. They lie in wait at the side of the road, where they can conceal themselves in the brushwood, and spring upon you suddenly. The man that I spoke to I recognized as one of those who plundered me two or three years ago; I don't know whether he recognized me or not."

"They don't acknowledge the French authority," continued Renaud, "and the most of their depredations are carried on further to the south where they are not subject to the authorities of Algeria. They have sense enough to know that if they invade French territory and commit outrages within the lines, they would be subject to severe punishment."

"It wouldn't be very easy to punish them when they haven't any fixed living places, but simply wander around the desert," Ned remarked. "The French troops sent out to punish them would have a very hard time finding them."

"That's true," Renand answered, "and, as they know the desert perfectly, they have hiding places that only themselves know about. When pursued they scatter in all directions, and, of course, the troops can't do that. The way to punish them most easily is to arrest every Chaamba whenever he sets foot in French territory. They like to come in to the French posts occasionally to

purchase goods of various kinds, and would feel the deprivation if they were totally excluded."

The reader will perceive that we are putting Renaud's language into grammatical English, instead of a very broken sort which he used in conversation, and, at times, was barely intelligible. Hereafter throughout this volume we shall follow the same plan, with possibly a few exceptions.

The caravan halted for the night near a small oasis of about one hundred palm trees. The oasis was nourished by a spring of brackish water, which Harry said was excellent to bathe in, but not very palatable as a beverage. A village, consisting of three or four Arab families, was not far from the spring, on a little knoll which overlooked the tillable ground. Ned and Harry went to the village, where they succeeded in purchasing a supply of eggs, and endeavored, without success, to negotiate for a pair of chickens. The owners refused to part with their fowls, giving as a reason for their refusal that if they sold their flocks they would not have eggs to dispose of to strangers. The youths accepted the argument, and expressed themselves satisfied with obtaining the eggs.

As they came away from the village Harry remarked that it seemed almost universally the custom of the natives to put their towns and villages on the barren ground outside of an oasis, and rarely within the limits of the palm trees.

"I suppose," replied Ned, "it is because the land is so valuable. They can't afford to waste a single inch of ground on which anything will grow, and for this reason

they reserve all of the tillable earth for the purpose of cultivation, and build their houses, villages, and towns on the barren or desert soil. They are certainly very wise in so doing, in view of the high value placed upon the tillable portion."

Later in the evening the subject was mentioned to Renaud, who corroborated Ned's view.

"I wish," said Renaud, "that you could see some of the places where the Arabs have established their gardens in the region called the Souf. There's a good-sized town in it, which covers a large area of ground and contains altogether about five hundred houses, and there are several smaller towns like it in the district. The houses are not close together, as in ordinary towns, but are scattered over a large area of ground, so as to bring them in the neighborhood of the gardens that belong to their owners. The place is on a level plain, and by going down from thirty to eighty feet in the sand moist earth is always found, and in this earth gardens and date palms are planted. As you approach it you see the tops of the palm trees rising above the ground, and, as you are too far away to make out the gardens, you think it is an immense growth of very low and thinly scattered palm trees. When you get to it you wonder at the patience of the people who created them."

"But how is that?" Ned asked.

"Why," replied Renaud, "each garden is nothing more than a great hole scooped out of the ground, rarely less than thirty feet deep, and sometimes more than seventy; all depending upon its position in the plain. All

around the place is nothing but the desert of loose sands; the walls of the pits are sloping, as they can't afford to build them with cut stone, and each garden contains from twenty to fifty palm trees. Among the trees fine crops of carrots, turnips, melons, onions, tobacco, and other vegetables are raised, and they grow very luxuriantly, yielding three excellent crops every year."

"Is the soil moist enough to sustain the trees of the gardens without watering?" queried Harry.

"Oh, no, not by any means," was the reply, "every garden contains a well which is from twenty to forty feet deep. The water of these wells is unfit to drink, as it contains too much salt, but it answers the purposes of the natives. The vegetables that I spoke of are watered every day, and the palm trees twice or three times a week. They draw the water from the wells in buckets made of leather, and sometimes where the wells are deep they make use of a long pole balanced near the center, like the old-fashioned well-sweep which you have seen in America. Every day attention must be paid to the watering, or the gardens would dry up and be unproductive."

"What a vast amount of work it must require to make one of these gardens," Ned remarked, "and what steady industry to keep up the never-failing supply of water."

"Yes, that's true," said Renaud, "and I haven't told you all by any means."

"Why, what else can there be?" Ned asked.

"I mentioned," said Renaud, "that the place was in the midst of the desert, where the shifting sands are carried about by the winds. The sand is constantly

drifting according as the wind blows, and, no matter which way it blows, it carries the sand over the town. Every morning the owner of a garden must carefully remove all the sand that has rained in upon his place during the last twenty-four hours. His watchfulness in this matter must be as great as the watering of his growing trees and vegetables. Let him neglect it for a few days, and the garden which has caused years of work to make will become again a part of the desert.

“For miles and miles around the sand is so barren that no living things can exist, with the possible exception of jackals and little foxes that roam among the gardens and live upon birds, which are quite abundant. The natives encourage the presence of the little animals which are called fenneks by the Arabs; and many of them keep tame fenneks about their houses. The birds are troublesome, as they attack the dates while they are ripening, so that the natives are quite willing to be deprived of their society. A stranger who is fond of bird shooting is always welcome there, and the more birds he gets, the better the natives are pleased.”

Ned asked if the fennek was found anywhere else in Algeria, to which Renaud replied in the affirmative.

“It is found in many parts of the Sahara,” he continued, “and I wonder we haven’t seen any before this. Come to think of it, I did see one in a cage at Tuggurt, but you were not with me at the time. However, we’ll be likely to run across one before long, and if you want to bother yourself with a pet while traveling you can easily buy one.”

Ned was at first inclined to invest in the purchase of one of these animal curiosities, but on second thought he resolved that it would be injudicious thus to burden himself. He called to mind his troubles while journeying once by rail in the United States, with a medium-sized dog as a companion; he said it cost him about as much for the dog's traveling expenses as it did for himself, and he was obliged to put himself to a great deal of inconvenience. Occasionally he could smuggle the animal into the ordinary passenger car, but as for the Pullman cars, the rules against dogs being admitted were rigidly prohibitive. A considerable part of the time he rode, when allowed to do so, in the baggage-car, in order to give the dog the benefit of his society. As he ran these things over in his mind he concluded that he would not indulge just then in a fennek.

About daybreak the next morning Renaud came to the tent where the three travelers were sleeping, and gently awoke the two youths without disturbing the doctor.

"There's a leopard out here in the oasis," he whispered, "and perhaps you can shoot him."

Ned and Harry needed no second call; the prospect of bagging a leopard made them fully awake in a moment, and in very little more time than it takes to say so they were dressed and ready for business.

Renaud told them to take their rifles, instead of shot-guns, as the leopard would require something more than duck-shot to bring him down. The boys had anticipated his advice by taking their rifles, and each had a dozen cartridges in his pocket in case of need.

They found the inhabitants of the village stirred up, and some of them were at the camp indicating to Renaud the point where the leopard was last seen. Renaud listened patiently to the Arabs' description, and then repeated it to the youths. The animal had been prowling in the oasis some time during the night and made an attack upon one of the chicken-houses. The noise made by the disturbed chickens had aroused their owners, and as they came out of their dwellings they saw the animal sneaking away among the palm trees.

There was a ridge of sand at one side of the oasis extending the entire length of it, and this ridge was high enough to enable a man in stooping posture to be entirely hidden from view as he passed along its farther side. Renaud suggested that one of the youths should take up a position near the little cluster of houses, while the other, accompanied by two or three Arabs, should go to the farther side of the oasis, keeping himself concealed behind the sand ridge. In this way, if the leopard had not yet left the oasis for some other place of concealment, they could drive him to expose himself to a shot from at least one of their rifles.

The plan was approved by the youths, who proceeded to carry it out, but a difficulty was found in getting the Arabs to accompany them. They were quite willing that the white men should kill the intruders upon their hen-coops, and take whatever risk was necessary in so doing, but they did not believe in exposing their own precious selves to any danger. The owner of the despoiled coop was somewhat reluctantly persuaded to accompany

Harry, and had he not been animated by a spirit of revenge it is doubtful if he would have consented.

Yusef and Abdullah went with Harry and the native, while Renaud and one of the camel-men accompanied Ned. Renaud was armed with a rifle, and, as there were thus two armed men together, the camel-man did not hesitate to lend his services. As soon as the parties were distributed, Harry on one side of the oasis, and Ned on the other, they spread out and began to move slowly towards each other. Of course they knew that the leopard had seen them and would understand their purpose. He is not a brave animal, and will always run away if he can, but when driven into a corner he is ready to defend himself, and is a fighter of no mean calibre.

Harry and his accompanying supporters had advanced about twenty yards when one of the sharp-eyed Arabs uttered an exclamation and pointed towards the base of a palm tree. Harry looked in the direction indicated, and saw the leopard crawling slowly along and hugging closely to the ground. Part of his body was concealed by the palm tree, and it was evidently the animal's intention to make his way from one tree to another as cautiously as possible until he reached the edge of the oasis. Then, doubtless, he would make a rapid run for safety in the open desert.

Harry watched his chance, holding his rifle to his shoulder, and when the region of the animal's heart was exposed he fired.

His shot was a good one, and hit the mark very nearly where it was intended to. The leopard gave a leap into

the air, Harry thinks about six or seven feet, and then fell heavily to the ground. The youth waited where he stood and then, slipping another cartridge into his rifle, advanced very cautiously. The Arabs dropped back to a respectful distance behind him, and he had considerable difficulty in persuading one of them to come forward and try to stir up the leopard with a jereed, or stalk of the palm leaf.

These jereeds, we may remark, are used for many purposes. Huts are constructed of them, they are used as palings for fences, made into lances, burned as fuel, and altogether are very useful to the people of the desert. One of the Arabs that accompanied Harry carried a long jereed, and it was with this weapon that the youth wished the attendant to stir up the leopard to make sure that he was dead, he, meanwhile, standing with rifle ready cocked, and prepared to shoot in case of need.

When the man was sufficiently nerved up to make the attempt he did so, and the leopard was found to be quite dead.

Then a great shout rose from the Arabs, which brought all the villagers to the spot, and the body of the beast was borne in triumph to the camp. The Arabs were very grateful to the youths for their success in ridding them of this pest, and they brought out about twenty eggs which they wished the boys to accept in return for their services. The youths declined the tribute offered to their skill, and asked Renaud to explain to them that they would be pleased to shoot as many leopards as the natives would bring along. Renaud translated the proposal, to

which the Arabs replied that they were sorry they had no more leopards, but if Ned and Harry would come again they might be able to accommodate them.

The killing of the leopard, following that of the lion, already described, led to a talk concerning the animals of the Sahara. The youths had many questions to ask of Renaud, and the Frenchman told them that the leopard was scattered through the greater part of the Sahara, and sometimes, if caught while young, was trained by the Arabs for hunting purposes. When thus trained, he is usually kept in a comparatively dark place, and when taken out for the hunt his eyes are covered with a hood. Sometimes he is led, and sometimes he is carried on the back of a camel.

When the game, generally a gazelle, is sighted, the head of the leopard is turned in its direction, and the hood is removed. Away bounds the animal, but, fleet as is the gazelle, it cannot outstrip the leopard. Springing on the shoulders of his prey, he bears it to the earth, bursts its jugular vein with one of his fangs, and proceeds to suck its blood. The hunting party comes up as soon as possible, and it is no small task to separate the leopard from the gazelle; until he has exhausted the supply of blood, he refuses to be taken off, and is not at all unlikely to attack his master if he persists in removing him.

“There is also the panther,” said Renaud, “which is found in various parts of the Sahara, but more frequently in the northern than in the southern portion. He is an ugly customer to meet, but, like most wild animals, will avoid a fight if he can do so. Occasionally the Arabs

catch a young panther and tame him: he is a nice enough pet when very young, and a baby panther is as playful as a kitten, though not quite as gentle. When he attains his full size he is somewhat dangerous, as he is apt to be too much in earnest when at play. You may have a chance to shoot a panther one of these days, and if I hear of one near any of the camps I will let you know."

On the day after the adventure with the leopard, our friends saw in the distance, a small flock of ostriches, and, needless to say, Ned and Harry immediately had a longing for an ostrich hunt. They appealed the case to the doctor, but that experienced gentleman shook his head and said he didn't think ostrich hunting was in their line just then. Of course they deferred to the argument of the doctor, and said nothing more on the subject. The ostriches had not taken them altogether by surprise, as they had seen some of these birds at Tuggurt; some were in large cages, or, rather, in inclosures open at the top, and others were wandering about the marketplace making themselves quite at home, and levying tribute upon the piles of vegetables and grain offered for sale. Ned remarked that they were systematic and cunning in their depredations, watching their chance to do a little thieving while the owner of the stolen property had stepped aside for a moment, or turned his back upon his wares.

The youths questioned Renaud on the subject of ostrich hunting, and the latter described at some length the way it was carried on.

“In the first place,” said Renaud, “the time for ostrich hunting is in the hottest part of summer ; the hotter the weather is the more easily the birds lose their strength. An ostrich hunt is liable to last for several days, and therefore proper preparations must be made. It is rather hard work for Europeans, and I wouldn’t advise you to indulge in it, but the Arabs get along all right and seem to enjoy it.”

“From twelve to twenty Arabs,” continued Renaud, “make up a hunting party, each of them mounted on horseback. Each rider is accompanied by a servant and a camel, carrying provisions for the men and water for both men and horses. Fuel is taken along for cooking purposes, unless the region where the hunt is to take place abounds in bushes and other things sufficient for making a fire.

“The ostrich is generally found where grass has come up in consequence of recent rains, or in hollows where the ground is sufficiently moist to keep a little vegetation alive. The Arabs say that whenever the ostrich sees lightning, or observes other indications of a coming storm, he has the instinct to know where the storm will burst and proceeds unerringly to that spot. He knows that vegetation will follow the rain, and directs himself accordingly.

“The organizers of a hunt sometimes send out messengers several days in advance to ascertain where ostriches are to be found, and they also obtain information from caravans or from solitary travelers. As soon as they are satisfied as to the direction to pursue, they travel as

rapidly as possible until the place where the ostriches were seen is reached. There they halt and make a bivouac, and the next morning two of their servants are sent out to get sight of the birds. For this purpose the best runners are picked out, and they go entirely naked, except a loin cloth at the waist. When they see the birds, they lie down and watch the movements of the flock for awhile, and then one of them goes back to the bivouac with the information.

“Sometimes he can report from fifty to a hundred ostriches, and at others only two or three. The company immediately proceeds to the spot where the birds were seen, being guided there by the man who brought the information. The nearer they approach to it, the more cautious are their movements, as it is necessary that the birds should not see them until the proper time arrives. The hunters are mounted on their horses, and these make a wide detour so as to form a circle around the ostriches, but so far away that they cannot be perceived. When the riders have taken their places those on foot walk towards the center of the ring, spreading out considerably and making demonstrations to scare the ostriches. The birds run away in great alarm, and in trying to escape they run against the circle of men on horseback; then they run back again, and, encountering the line of people on foot, they retrace their steps until they again reach the mounted Arabs.”

“Thus they go, back and forth, back and forth, again and again, exhausting their strength, and as soon as they begin to show signs of weariness the huntsmen narrow

the circle, and frighten them more than ever. At last the ostriches open their wings, which is a sure indication that they are ready to drop with fatigue, and when this sign is observed the Arabs close in upon them. Each rider selects a bird, rides directly at it, and strikes it a heavy blow with his jereed. The ostrich, when struck, falls to the ground. One after another of the flock is knocked down, or, if the Arabs choose, the birds may be taken alive, as they are so exhausted that they can scarcely walk."

"I suppose," said Ned, "that the bird is taken chiefly for his feathers."

"You are quite right," said Renaud; "the chief value of the ostrich is in his feathers, and sometimes a good many francs' worth are taken from a single bird. The ostriches that you saw at Tuggurt were probably caught when young in just such a manner as I have described. They were not in fine feather, and therefore it was injudicious to kill them."

"I've read," said Harry, "that in times of danger the ostrich buries his head in the sand, or under a bush or rock, thinking he will be safe as long as he can't see his enemy. Is that really true?"

"Possibly there may be some truth in it," Renaud replied, "as I've heard of it before. It is proper to say that I never heard it from the Arab hunters and therefore place very little faith in it. The ostrich isn't a wise bird by any means, but I don't believe that a respectable one would be such an idiot as that. However, it's a pretty story, anyway, and as it has been believed so long it isn't wise to destroy it."

“Is it really true,” queried Ned, “that the Arabs tame the ostrich and ride on him as we ride on horses, or is that another beautiful fiction?”

“I don’t know whether it is or not,” said Renaud. “The ostrich can be easily tamed if taken when young, as you have already seen, but nobody in this locality has ever used him for riding purposes. I have heard that the natives of southern Africa ride the ostrich, and use him for hunting wild birds of his own kind. I have read in a French story-book that a native will mount on the back of a tame ostrich, ride into a flock, or near enough to it to shoot one after another of the birds with poisoned arrows. To do this he has to hug closely to the back of his two-legged steed in order that the wild birds may not discover his presence and take alarm. The ostrich can easily carry a small man on his back, as he is very strong, and weighs, when full grown, between two and three hundred pounds.”

“I’ve heard,” remarked Harry, “that the eggs of the ostrich are very fine eating; I wish we could have one to try.”

“They are very good eating,” was the reply, “and you may have the opportunity of trying one very soon. You needn’t wish for half a dozen eggs for the supper of your party; one will be quite sufficient, as it contains the equivalent of about two dozen hen’s eggs.”

That very evening an Arab brought into the camp several ostrich eggs, and as the price he asked for them was very reasonable, the doctor purchased his entire stock, distributing all but one among the men of the expedition,

and reserving that one for himself and the two youths. The egg was cooked by standing it on end in the fire and breaking the upper portion of the shell so that a stick could be inserted for stirring the contents while the cooking process was going on. The egg proved very palatable, and Ned said he would not mind having ostrich eggs for supper every day—until he got tired of them.

The presence of the egg led to another question,—how does the ostrich make its nest, and how are the eggs hatched?

To these questions Renaud replied that the ostrich lays its eggs in the sand, and sits on them at night or in rainy weather. On clear days the heat of the sun on the sand is quite sufficient for all hatching purposes. The eggs are grouped close together in what may be called a nest. Outside of it at a little distance other eggs are found, and as these are not covered by the birds at night, they are not hatched. An idea prevails that these outside eggs are intended as food for the birds as they come out of their shells, but as they are generally found unbroken after the eggs in the nest have been hatched, and the young birds are gone, this supposition can hardly be a correct one.

“In the afternoon of this day,” wrote Ned in his journal, “we found ourselves among hills of drifting sand for the greater part of the day, and made little progress. The hills and ridges followed each other in rapid succession; the hills were not very high, about one hundred feet or so, but it was toilsome work to climb them. Horses, camels, and men found the ascent very severe.

“Harry and I struggled through sand which came very nearly to our knees, and sometimes above them. We carried our rifles, being unwilling to be separated from them for a moment. The rifles weighed ten pounds each, but every time that we reached the top of the hills of sand it seemed as though mine was not less than a quarter of a ton. We had a supply of ammunition in our waistcoats, and each cartridge seemed to multiply itself in weight about twenty times. Going down the hill was almost as much work as ascending it, the one difference being that we had the advantage of momentum, and, though we sank deeper in the sand, a smaller amount of effort was necessary to extract our feet at every step.

“The horses also had a hard struggle, quite as much as the human portion of the expedition. The camels, as stated elsewhere, are adapted by nature to this kind of travel; therefore they suffered the least, though sometimes it looked as if several of them would give out, lie down, and die. When a camel feels his strength giving out he lies down and refuses to rise until his load is removed. In such cases he will generally, but by no means always, come to his feet again and proceed. On great routes of travel, where large numbers of camels are employed, the way is marked by the bleaching bones of ‘the ships of the desert’ that have perished through exhaustion caused by severe work or deprivation of food and water.

“Not a day passes that we are not treated to a mirage, and the deception is so perfect that even the doctor has been taken in. A little to the right of us, on the first day out, we saw a beautiful lake, oval in shape, and sur-

rounded by trees. As we were traveling at that time, we would not go near it; the doctor called to Renaud and told him that if it were not too much out of our way he would like to go and see that lake. Renaud smiled and replied that the lake which he pointed out was Lake Fantasy, and then he explained that it was nothing more nor less than a mirage.

“‘There’s no lake at all there,’ he said, ‘and if we tried to find it it would run away from us.’

“‘Very well,’ said the doctor; ‘we will let Lake Fantasy take care of itself, but it is a most perfect deception, as perfect a one as I ever saw.’

Renaud went on to explain what the doctor already knew, but Harry and I didn’t, that you can distinguish between a real lake or body of water and an imaginary one by observing its color. In the mirage the apparent lake has exactly the same color as the sky above it. Such may be the case, too, in a real lake, but generally it is not so. The lake is usually of a darker blue than the sky, but sometimes it is lighter than the sky in color.

“You can set this down as a rule, so Renaud told us, that where sky and water are of the same color it is a mirage, but possibly a real lake; where there is a decided difference in color it is not a mirage.

“On the fourth day of our journey the morning was sultry and the sky without a cloud. The heat was of high degree and the air was perfectly still. Harry and I were riding side by side on our horses, when off at a distance we observed something that looked like a large column or pillar, and it appeared to be in motion while standing up-

right. I called Renaud's attention to it and asked what it was.

“‘That,’ said he, ‘is a whirlwind of sand, and the pillar that you see is the sand which the whirlwind carries in its midst. I hope it won't come near us, as it is a very uncomfortable thing to meet.’

“The whirlwind moved about over the desert in a very erratic way, and we could see by the clean swept appearance of the ground beneath it that it was taking up great volumes of sand. It moved on here and there in a somewhat zigzag way, and every turn that it made it came nearer to us.

“‘What will happen?’ I asked Renaud, ‘if that whirlwind happens to come upon us?’

“‘It might overwhelm us, blind and choke us, and pile the sand about us, so that we should be buried out of sight. Have your rifles ready, and if it comes within shooting distance fire into the midst of the column, just as sailors fire at water-spouts at sea. The Arabs do so, and they say that it breaks up the whirlwinds, and more than once has saved many lives.’

“We got our guns in readiness to do as Renaud instructed us. On and on came the whirlwind and after a time we felt the breezes which indicated that we were in the outer edge of its sphere of motion. I fired at the moving column and so did Harry. The doctor and Renaud joined in the shooting, but the whirlwind went on as though nothing had happened. It seemed, though, to be affected by the shooting, as it changed its course and went away.”

CHAPTER VI.

CAUGHT IN A SAND-STORM — A DANGEROUS COUNTRY.

THE end of the valley of the Oued Ghir was reached after much wearisome travel through loose and shifting sands. Beyond this valley there was an ascent to higher ground, the road alternating between a hard surface in which rocks were scattered about and great patches of loose sands which were quite enough, when no wind was blowing, to make travel very unpleasant. When the breezes arose locomotion was practically impossible. At the last of the wells of good water, the water-skins were filled and carefully stowed on the camels whose duty it was to carry them.

As before stated, one of the camels was principally laden with water, but each camel had as a part of his burden one or more skins of water, so that in case a rider became separated from the caravan there was no danger of his suffering from thirst, unless his absence was long continued. Each horseman had a small skin of water attached to the saddle, and so far as precautions could go, the danger of suffering from lack of water was reduced to a minimum.

Renaud told our young friends that, unless an unforeseen accident happened, travelers in the desert rarely perish from thirst.

“Of course,” he said, “a good many things may happen to bring about such an unfortunate circumstance. The traveler, or caravan,” he continued, “may start upon a journey with an insufficient supply of water, or the liquid in the skins may be dried up by unusual heat. The skins may leak, and the water be wasted, or they may be lost by being improperly packed. A journey where there is no water may be much longer than expected; camels may give out or other things happen to delay progress. But, leaving out all these things, and some others I might mention, there is very little danger of death from lack of water. As a last resort, the Arabs kill their camels, or a portion of them, and drink the water which is stowed away in the stomach of the beast. Nature has provided the camel with a reservoir, in which he can store away sufficient water to last him for a week. There is one variety of camel which is said to be able to go for twenty days without drinking.

“One of the greatest misfortunes in this matter,” said Renaud, “is the drying up of wells on which reliance for the replenishing of water has been placed. Sometimes caravans containing hundreds of men and hundreds of camels have perished in this way, and there is an instance on record in which a thousand men and more than two thousand camels were destroyed by this misfortune. They started with a supply of water quite sufficient to carry them to certain wells in the desert, which had been known to flow for over a hundred years. Their supply was exhausted, or very nearly so, when they neared the wells where they expected to refill their water-skins.

“It was known that the wells were in their usual condition six weeks previous. Imagine the horror of the leaders when they reached the spot and found that not a drop of water was to be obtained there. There were more than a dozen wells in the group which had hitherto yielded good drinking water in abundance. One well after another was examined, and all were found to be hopelessly dry. It was a six days’ journey to the nearest water, and to travel for six days without water under the hot sun of Africa was absolutely impossible.”

“The men dug new wells near the old ones in the hope of striking a fresh vein of water, but their efforts were fruitless; then they killed some of the camels in the hope of being able to obtain water from their stomachs, but again they were disappointed, as very little remained of the supply that the camels had taken in at the last drinking place.

“The leaders of the party gathered together in a very serious conclave. The great question was what should they do to save their lives and the lives of their comrades; the only thing that gave any promise of escape was to mount the camels and travel away as fast as possible. Each day they would slaughter some of the animals, and obtain what water they could from the stomachs of the animals, and by sucking and chewing the flesh of the beasts a little moisture might be obtained. Orders were given to throw off all burdens of the camels except the saddles. Silks and other goods of great value were scattered on the ground in order to lighten as much as possible the burdens of the patient and thirsty

animals; then the order to mount was given, and the column moved away.

“Before long men began to fall from their places, and the camels lay down, and refused to go further. The supply of water obtained by killing the camels was totally inadequate. On and on went the caravan, as best it could; the bodies of men and camels marking the line of march through the desert. Of all the entire number of men and beasts, only two of the former and one of the latter succeeded in reaching a place of safety and telling the story of their sad misfortune in the desert. We may rejoice,” concluded Renaud, “that occurrences of this kind are rare, but, unfortunately, they do happen sometimes.”

Ned and Harry asked Renaud how the wandering Arabs in the desert manage to secure water when they are at war with each other, and one party has possession of wells.

“I was just going to tell you about that,” said Renaud. “The Tuaregs and the Chaamba, the really nomadic tribes of the desert, know every well that we know about, and they have in addition a great many wells of their own. Their wells are mostly hidden, that is, they are not marked by a pillar, or a heap of stones, or by any artificial indication of the existence of the well, and even if one comes directly on the spot he is not likely to discover it, as it is covered with a flat stone, on which sand has been piled and levelled so as to conceal the place. The landmarks around the well are known only to the tribe to which it belongs, and it is death to reveal the locality

to any person who does not belong to the tribe. Sometimes the knowledge of such a well is obtained by surprising a party while taking water from it, but this doesn't often happen."

"What a pity it is," one of the youths remarked, "that no scientist has yet been able to produce water from air. I suppose such a thing is impossible, or it would have been accomplished before this."

"Well," replied the other, "all you want is the gases that compose water. Then I suppose it wouldn't be difficult."

"Quite true," was the reply, "no more than it would be to have a good dinner with plenty of first-class food, but you can't manufacture water without the necessary components, any more than you can take dinner when you have nothing to eat."

On the day that the party ascended from the valley of Oued Ghir to the higher ground they were overtaken by a party of four mounted soldiers, who had been sent to them by the commanding officer at Tuggurt. They brought a message to the effect that an officer who had been sent to the sheikh of the Tuaregs had reached Tuggurt, and reported a successful journey. He had arranged that a safe-conduct could be granted by the commandant at Tuggurt or by the governor of Biskra to any party of travelers, by the payment of a small tribute to the sheikh of the tribe or his representative. The soldiers brought a safe-conduct for Doctor Whitney and his party, and it was stipulated in the document that in case they met a Tuareg party they should exhibit the

paper, which was drawn in both French and Arabic, and pay the amount stipulated, which was one dollar for each man of the expedition. The plan savored a good deal of blackmail, but we must remember that it has long been the custom of African travelers to pay tribute to the rulers of the countries through which they pass. This system prevails through all parts of Africa, and there is no reason why the Sahara should be exempt from it. Besides, it is much more satisfactory to pay, and be allowed to go unmolested than to be robbed of everything, including horses and camels, and be forced to continue or retrace one's journey on foot.

It was near nightfall when the soldiers overtook the caravan and delivered their message. Camp was formed shortly afterwards, and Doctor Whitney told Renaud to see that the soldiers were fed on the best that the camp afforded. We may be sure that Renaud carried out his instructions, and was mindful of the old adage,—“The bearer of welcome tidings deserves a bountiful reward.” In the morning the messengers returned towards Tuggurt, carrying with them a warm letter of thanks from the doctor to the commandant, together with several letters from the three Americans, who sat up until after midnight to write to their friends at home.

The safe-conduct from the commandant did not arrive any too soon. On that very day our friends met a party of Tuaregs mounted on their swift dromedaries, which are said to be the swiftest and finest of their race. The two parties approached each other slowly and halted about a hundred yards apart; then Doctor Whitney and

Renaud rode forward, while at the same time the Tuaregs despatched two of their number to meet them half way. When the four came together all dismounted, the Tuaregs from their dromedaries, and the doctor and Renaud from their horses. Civilities were exchanged, the safe-conduct was exhibited, and the tribute money paid over.

The sheikh of the party noted on the margin of the paper the payment of tribute money, and then the formalities were ended. This one payment sufficed for the journey. Any subsequent party of Tuaregs, seeing the document, and ascertaining that the safe-conduct had been paid for, would not exact a renewal thereof. The Tuaregs are an honorable set of thieves, and, like most rascals the world over, pretend to set great store upon their promises.

The other troublesome tribe of that part of the desert is the Chaamba, which has already been mentioned. They are not as numerous as the Tuaregs, and the country through which they roam is not so extensive, but they are great depredators, and omit no opportunity to plunder. A few days after the occurrence just mentioned our friends had a narrow escape from them. One evening, while they were encamped, three or four Arabs came into the camp on foot. They said that they belonged to a caravan which had been attacked by the Chaamba; they had lost their camels and escaped only with their lives. The Chaamba had secured and bound several of their comrades, and would probably hold them for ransom. Those who had escaped had done so by mere swiftness of foot, and by watching their chance while the marauders

were engaged in securing the camels and binding the men who had fallen into their hands.

Investigation showed that Doctor Whitney's party had gone directly through the Chaamba party while it was concealed in a dense thicket of scrub bushes, four or five feet high. The Chaamba had formed an ambuscade, and, for some reason, either that they were not ready, or they did not like the appearance of the rifles that our friends carried, they did not deem it judicious to make an assault.

Harry said he could not understand why it was that a whole tribe of people considered it a legitimate business to plunder others. He would suppose that there were enough honest people in the tribe to suppress robbery and deter the others from it.

Ned replied that he believed honesty to be a conventional matter rather than a natural trait. We are unable to give his argument at length, but will endeavor to make a brief synopsis of it.

“What we call honesty and the regard for the property of others,” said Ned, “is a matter of education, and is not born with us. A small child sees something that it wants and takes it; it never occurs to him that it may belong to somebody else; in fact, it doesn't know anything about property rights at all. After he grows older he is instructed in these matters, and in due time learns to regard the rights of property. If he went on without any such education, he would be pretty certain to do at the age of ten or twenty years exactly as he does just as he begins to walk. If he had been brought up to believe

that might makes right, he would be exactly like these marauding Arabs, or like the Indians in North America. Before the American Indians were so nearly extinguished by the weapons and vices of the white men they regarded horse-stealing as a perfectly legitimate business, and the one who had stolen the greatest number of horses was regarded as the best man of his tribe. And right in the heart of civilization burglars and other thieves are proud of their profession, and think that society is all wrong when it treats them as it does. These Arabs have been brought up to believe that it is perfectly right and proper to follow their own inclinations, and look upon stealing as the easiest way of making an honest living."

As a matter of curiosity, our young friends wanted to see a sand-storm in the desert; that is, they desired to know what a sand-storm was, but they did not wish for a severe one, and would be satisfied with it if it died away very soon after it began. Their desire was granted, at least, in one respect; they experienced a sand-storm, but it was a good deal more severe than they wanted. It came up one day while they were on the march, blowing directly in their faces. At first it was not a strong wind, but it steadily increased, and whirled the sand about so that the party seemed to be in a dense fog. The sky was cloudless, and the sun visible nearly all the time, as the sand swept only a few yards above the surface, but it was sufficiently high to envelop the camels as well as the men.

The horses were fairly blinded by the flying sand, and very shortly refused to push on against it. It was

impossible to see ahead for more than a yard, not even to see the steps of the animal immediately preceding. Horses and camels turned around so as to hold their heads from the wind, instead of towards it, and in this position it was possible to make out an object forty or fifty feet away. Ned said it was quite as bewildering as a snowstorm, and far more disagreeable. The sand sought out the crevices in one's clothing, and it was not long before we felt as though our garments had been dipped and rolled in the sand before we put them on. *

The party was unable to keep to the route as long as the storm lasted. The howling of the wind was so great that when the travelers wished to speak to one another they were obliged to come close together and shout at the top of their voices. The doctor suggested going into camp, but Renaud opposed it, and proposed a simple bivouac instead. He said it would be useless to try to form a camp, as the tents could not be set up in that tremendous wind. Even the very low tents of the Arabs could not be set up, as the tent-pegs would not hold during the time it took to drive them into the ground.

The camels, some of them, at least, thrust their noses into the ground to avoid inhaling the sand which was flying in the wind. Dr. Whitney put on his outdoor spectacles, and tied a silk handkerchief over his face like a veil; in this way he kept the sand out of his nostrils, but in spite of his precaution he was blinded and almost suffocated. The youths followed his example, and were glad that they did so, but they only relieved themselves of one degree of suffering by taking another that was only a little less.

The storm lasted about four hours, and then the wind began to abate. In half an hour it had diminished to a mere zephyr, and thirty minutes after that the wind that blew was not sufficient to move the sand in appreciable quantities. As the wind died away the journey was resumed, though a little time was required for getting the camels together, some of them having strayed during the storm.

“Traveling in the desert is monotonous, as one can easily imagine. The landscape does not vary greatly; in fact, it is more monotonous than the road itself. We take observations for latitude and longitude every day when it is convenient to do so, although there is no real occasion for it, as our guides are familiar with the route and know the best places for halting in the daytime or camping in the evening. We have become accustomed to camel riding, and, though I can’t say we like it, we do not find it as unpleasant as on the first day that we undertook to ride the queer-looking beasts.

“And this reminds me of the white camels of the Tuaregs,—immense creatures, very powerful, finely formed, and as white as one usually sees a white horse; not absolutely pure white, but very near it. These camels are carefully bred in the middle of the desert, where the Tuaregs make their homes. The people are very jealous about allowing this breed of camels to go into other hands. They absolutely refuse to sell them, no matter what price may be offered, and the few that have been brought north of the Atlas Mountains were obtained in the battles with the Tuaregs where they got the worst of it.

“We saw four of these camels to-day, and their great size astonished us. They carry enormous burdens, will travel seventy or eighty miles a day, and go for eighteen or twenty days without water. The Tuaregs frequently come to Tuggurt with these camels, and occasionally to Biskra, but never beyond the latter place, as the animals cannot endure cold weather or anything that approaches it.

“I have been somewhat disappointed, though agreeably so, in the character of the desert since we left the Oued Ghir. I thought it would be nothing but shifting sands, very difficult to travel through, but we found, on the contrary, for more than half the way no sand worth speaking of, but bare, hard, desert earth, like any ordinary earth deprived of verdure. Where we found this kind of road we have ridden our horses; where we had sandy roads we exchanged horses for camels.

“Although we have a safe-conduct among the Tuaregs, we realize that we are in a dangerous country, and may be attacked at night by these marauders, who do not always wait to ascertain whom they are attacking. Consequently, when we camp at night we prepare for resistance. All the baggage is piled in front of our tent so as to make a good barricade, and we take turns in watching through the night.

“Renaud put one of our Arabs on watch the first night; Harry and I happened to be awake about midnight, and went out to see how the watching was going on. We came upon our sentry sitting on the ground near our tent, his gun lying by his side, and he leaning against

our baggage, and sound asleep. We took away the fellow's weapon, and then waked him, and sent him off to where the camels were picketed. Then I took my rifle, and stood guard for two hours, when Harry relieved me; when his two hours were up he called Renaud, who stood guard for the rest of the night until daybreak.

"After that the watching was divided between the doctor, ourselves, and Renaud, as we did not dare to trust any of our Arabs. We did not apply military law to our man and put him to death for sleeping at his post, but if we had followed Renaud's desires I think we should have done so. Renaud was master of the camp, and while we were at breakfast he administered a sound thrashing to the unfortunate fellow who allowed himself to go to sleep while on duty.

"On the fifth day we had a long and toilsome march, and did not reach a camping place until after dark, and the camp was made in a valley where there was a well of brackish water, suitable for camels, but unfit for human use. The valley was used for camping by travelers and caravans of various sorts, including the Tuaregs. As we descended the side of the valley, Renaud, who was in advance, suddenly stopped, and called attention to a light, perhaps half a mile away, and suggested that we get our guns in readiness as there was a strong probability of a fight.

"We put everything in order, carrying our rifles unslung, and each buckling on a revolver. We changed our course so that, instead of passing directly by the light, which was in the center of the valley, we would come

down upon it in file. Renaud told us to walk our horses until within a few yards of the light, then he would give a signal and we would trot past the light as rapidly as possible. If any shots were fired after us, we were to return the fire, first from our rifles, and then from our revolvers. The horsemen were to be in front, while the camels brought up the rear.

“When all was ready we moved on, the doctor and Renaud in front, then Harry and I, and behind us the camels. The horses seemed to snuff the battle, not far off, but close by, and they entered into the spirit of the thing with considerable enthusiasm. My heart began to beat so that I could hear it, but I think I was quite as cool as anybody else.

“Within a hundred yards of the camp we halted and our chief camel driver crept up to reconnoiter. He said there were ten or twelve men there with a single tent such as nearly all tribes of Arabs use in the Sahara. He could see that they had weapons and horses, but there were no camels in sight.

“On receiving this information, Renaud gave the order to advance. As we came close to the camp, he shouted in Arabic: —

“‘We are Mozabites.’

“The men around the little fire rose to their feet, and greeted us with a yell, together with the words: —

“‘Friends! Friends!’

“It was all right; they were friends,— a party from Waregla on their way to Tuggurt. Very quickly we dismounted, laid aside our weapons, and gathered around

a large basket of dates, which our newly formed friends set out as a welcome. It turned out that they had been on the alert just as much as we had, as they had heard in the stillness of the night the approach of horses' feet. They had just taken their weapons in hand when we rode up, and were quite ready for business, when they heard the announcement of Mozabites.

“The statement was not strictly true. We had two Mozabites among our camel drivers, and that was all; but the announcement suited the situation for all practical purposes, and the circumstances were not convenient for reading the names and nationalities of those who composed the party.”

CHAPTER VII.

IN SIGHT OF WAREGLA — AN ARAB DINNER.

THE two parties camped together on the night described at the end of the last chapter, and congratulated one another on their narrow escape from needless shedding of blood. The wind rose soon after our friends had formed camp, and great quantities of sand were whisked about in the strong breeze. Fuel was scarce, and, as the hour was late, the doctor decided that they would not take the trouble to cook dinner, but would make a meal from dates, biscuits, and cheese, washed down with water taken from one of the water-skins of their cargo. The place where they camped was sandy, and with the wind blowing as it was they could not make the tent pegs hold. They formed a screen by placing the camels in a row, and then requiring them to kneel; by the row of kneeling camels they placed the baggage, and within this circle tethered the horses, and spread their sleeping bags on the ground. Harry named the encampment *Hotel à la Belle Etoile* (Hotel of the Open Sky), and said there were few hotels in the world with better ventilation.

There was not much sleep in the camp that night, partly because it was after midnight before the travelers got to bed, and between that time and morning the horses

got loose several times, and mixed themselves up with the sleepers, and, furthermore, the drifting sands spread thickly over them, so that they roused themselves every hour or so to avoid being buried out of sight. They kept a careful watch all through the night and broke camp at five o'clock in the morning. Sleeping under difficulties like these tends very much towards early rising.

After three or four hours of marching, the party halted on the side of a range of hills which Ned describes in his journal as resembling a series of forts, as they stand at regular intervals from each other, and are flat on the tops. The doctor said that the tops of these hills were worn away by the waves of the ocean which formerly spread all over this part of Africa. The broad plain around them is considerably elevated above the level of the sea, and during all their journey since leaving the Oued Ghir our friends had been gradually rising. After passing this line of hills and going a few miles further, the party suddenly came upon the edge of an immense terrace, and looked down upon a plain which was apparently limitless.

The doctor and the youths were in advance as they reached the edge of the terrace. They halted and looked over the immense area before them, just as they had looked from the hill beyond Biskra over the great area of the northern Sahara. A few minutes after they halted Renaud joined them, and as he rode up to the edge of the terrace he waved his hand, as if to embrace all that part of the country beyond it.

"There," said he, "is the true desert; there is not

another break in it between this point and the valley of the Niger, the Mountains of the Moon, and Timbuctoo.

“You see that white spot in the distance?” he continued, pointing to the south; “that’s Waregla, the last oasis in Northern Africa.”

“Not a break whatever!” exclaimed Ned. “Is there no other settlement, or oasis, or place where men live between here and the Niger?”

“Yes. There are a few wells and habitable spots, or, rather, spots where one can find water, but there is no oasis large enough to support any appreciable number of people. Off towards the west is the oasis of Touat, which is on the caravan route to Timbuctoo. It’s a long journey from here to Touat, and a longer one to Timbuctoo; you can find water every five or six days, though sometimes the wells are dried up, and, unless you have an extra supply against such contingencies, the whole caravan may perish of thirst.”

Then the party descended from the plateau to the lower ground, and pushed on as rapidly as possible. Ned observed before they left their point of observation that the desert below them presented the appearance of a sandy beach, and the great plain beyond them resembled a vast sea or lake. He could almost hear the rippling of the waves, while the headland to the south, as they rode along, presented the appearance of a deep bay, very much like that of Algiers, and he half believed that he was looking over the Mediterranean, instead of the great waste of sand extending hundreds of miles away to the mysterious river.

The party hurried on, as Waregla was a good distance away, and they did not wish to spend another night in the desert. They passed a small oasis a mile or so to the right of their route, the oasis of N'goussa, and Harry remarked that its grove of palm trees resembled a forest of masts in the sandy haze. Then their route wound among some round-topped hills, a hundred or more feet in height, covered with tamarisk bushes and other small plants of the desert.

Yusef told the youths that these mounds were called El Behkerat, which means "young camels." He said the name comes from a story that one day, hundreds of years ago, a caravan of camels halted at a well in this neighborhood to get some water. There was a palm grove here then, and an old man was at the well drawing water for his palm trees. The leader of the caravan came up to the well, and said insultingly:—

"Make haste, thou vile son of a black raven."

Without knowing it, he had insulted a saint of the Moslem religion; a holy man who had power over nearly everything. The saint was angry at being addressed in this manner; he turned his face towards heaven, and stretched out his hands. The camels that had been standing there waiting their turn to drink lay down immediately, and were transformed into sandhills, and the well instantly dried up and has been dry ever since.

Harry was skeptical as to the truth of the story, whereupon Yusef remarked:—

"If you don't believe it, sir, look at the mounds into which the camels were transformed."

As the party approached Waregla, a sand mist rose on the plain in front of them, and beneath it the surface of the desert glistened like the waters of a broad river. Again was the doctor deceived, and it is proper to say that the youths were deceived likewise. The doctor thought it was a marsh, and afterwards admitted that he was on the point of wrapping a handkerchief around his face to keep out the malarial atmosphere, but remembered his previous deception just in time. Beyond this imaginary river, stretching away for a considerable distance, was a dense oasis of date palms, and in the middle of them three tall minarets indicated the position of Waregla.

One of the servants was mounted on a horse and sent forward to notify the sheikh or agha of Waregla of the arrival of the party. In accordance with the custom that generally prevails in Arabic countries, the doctor had brought a letter from the governor of Biskra to Sibi Zobeir, the agha of Waregla, who is a close friend of the French Government and rules his people very much in his own way.

“We rode into the palm grove,” said Harry in his journal, “and then halted to wait for a reply to our letter. We waited an hour or more, and then, becoming impatient, rode up to the gate of the city, and there halted. The gateway is a massive one, and is known as the Bab el Soultan (Sultan’s Gate). Several of the natives greeted us as we rode along, and all seemed friendly. The people were quite different from any we had yet seen. They were very swarthy, and not a few were black, with negro features. The women wore their

hair in ringlets and braided in plaits at the back of their heads, and they were covered with ornaments of red beads and gold and silver coins. They certainly had a liberal quantity of negro blood in their veins, as their hair was in nearly every case more or less frizzled. We waited at the gate for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then our messenger came out and said we should have an escort immediately. In another fifteen minutes a horseman mounted on a magnificent steed rode out, accompanied by two followers. He greeted us cordially, and requested us to mount and accompany him, which, of course, we did.

“We rode into the city and came to a halt in front of an ordinary building presenting a plain wall to the street, with a single doorway. Here our escort dismounted, and we did likewise. After a little delay, he took us into the interior of the building, to the reception-room of the agha, Sibi Zobeir, a handsome Arab, fully six feet high, with a dark complexion, oval face, and a prominent nose slightly hooked, slender fingers, dark, but not heavy beard trimmed to a point, and an expression of marked dignity and serenity. A glance from him towards those around him showed him to be of high extraction, and if the desert of Sahara possesses any blue-blooded aristocracy, he was certainly one of the highest of the kind. He received us courteously, and as we squatted on the divan to which he motioned us servants came in with pipes and coffee for our refreshment.

“The agha had the good sense to know that a long interview would not be agreeable to us, as we were just in

from the desert and undoubtedly desired to change our wardrobe and have something to eat. He said he had read our letter, welcomed us hospitably to Waregla, and he explained, through our interpreter, that he would gladly do anything that he could for us; then he rose to intimate that the audience was at an end, whereupon the officer who had escorted us from the gate took charge of us again.

“He led the way to a building, perhaps a hundred yards from that occupied by the agha, taking us into a square courtyard into which several rooms opened. We selected the largest of the rooms, which was about twenty feet square and quite bare of furniture of any kind. But it did not long remain empty, as the agha sent us a thick carpet to spread on the floor, and a large bundle of rugs on which we might recline. Our camels were waiting for us when we were taken to the building, and most of the baggage had been removed and placed on the ground. A part of it was piled in one of the other rooms, and such as we needed immediately was put into our own. Very quickly we opened our trunks, not the ordinary trunks of civilization, but soft ones of leather made especially for transportation on camel-back, and resembling huge valises. We did not array ourselves in purple and fine linen, but we did put on better-looking clothing than what we were then wearing.

“Just as we finished our toilet preparations we received a bountiful supply of dates and camel’s milk, which the agha sent to us. Renaud said that we would receive something more shortly, and advised us to eat lightly of

the proffered dainties. We acted upon his advice, and after partaking sparingly of the articles, gave the remainder to our followers, by whom it was quickly despatched. Less than an hour later two Arabs appeared bearing on their shoulders the carcass of a sheep, spitted on a long pole; it had been roasted in its skin, or, rather, baked in hot ashes. We squatted on the floor of our room, two on one side of the sheep, and the third on the other, the Arabs holding the carcass between us.

“Then a servant of the agha who accompanied them proceeded to cut off morsels, or, rather, tear them off with his fingers after slicing the carcass with his knife. When he came upon a particularly choice bit he put it into our mouths with his fingers. Possibly our hunger had something to do with it, but all agreed that we had never tasted a nicer piece of mutton, not excepting even the South-down of England or the famous mutton of Kentucky. We think we have discovered a new mode of cooking mutton which we will introduce when we go home to America. The wool is plucked from the carcass immediately after the animal is slain, and then the skin is thoroughly singed, just as a chicken is singed before roasting or baking. The skin being on the sheep during the process of cooking forms a protection for the juices of the meat and makes an excellent “crackling.”

“After the sheep we were served with liver skewered on sticks and cooked over a fire. They gave us no bread or vegetables, and we fell back on our supply of biscuits and upon some bread which Renaud had bought in the market. No wine or drink of any kind was offered us;

of course, we didn't expect wine when it was forbidden by the Koran to all good Moslems, and we now regretted having given all the camel's milk to our followers.

“In about half an hour after the arrival of the sheep there came another course of our dinner. This was a dish of kouskousou, which is generally abbreviated to ‘kouskous.’ It was brought by two servants and placed on the floor in front of us in a large covered dish, and was smoking hot. Kouskous is the principal food of the natives of Algeria, and when well cooked it is an excellent dish, being palatable as well as nourishing. It is made of barley or wheat meal coarsely ground; the grinding being done by the women of the household. When a dish of kouskous is required the meal is placed in a shallow pan about two feet in diameter, and a little milk or water is poured over it. It is allowed to soak a little while, and then the meal is rubbed in the palms of the hands into little pellets which resemble grains of rice. Afterwards, these pellets are slowly steamed for two or three hours, and when the steaming is completed the casual observer might suppose that he was looking at a dish of boiled rice.

“In this condition it is eaten by the poorer natives after a little salt is sprinkled over it. Those who can afford to do so mix dates, raisins, or other fruit of any kind with the steamed meal, and on the top of the whole pour a quantity of milk or rich broth. If they have broth to pour over it, the natural conclusion is that they have the meat from which it was made. If so, the meat, whether mutton or fowl, is laid on the top of the dish and the guests pull

off morsels of it while they eat. Bear in mind that no spoons, knives, or forks are used. The party sit on the floor around the bowl and eat with their fingers. If you want to realize the force of the adage that 'fingers were made before forks' you can do so by eating an Arab dinner. Sometimes the meat is cut or torn into small pieces and mixed in with the other materials. This is not, however, the regular Arab style, the dish in that case resembling more nearly a Turkish pilauf than the Arab kouskous.

"After the kouskous came coffee, and it was the best cup of coffee we had seen since leaving Tuggurt. The agha evidently knew what good living was from an Arabic point of view. Doubtless, he would have been puzzled if seated at Delmonico's table in New York, and would have enjoyed his own dishes better than those of western civilization, but he is so much a gentleman that I am sure he would have eaten heartily and praised everything that he touched.

"It was pretty late when our feast was finished, and when everything was cleared away we were not long in getting to bed. The quantity of food which the agha sent us was six times as much as we could devour, but our followers, together with the servants who had brought it, made short work of everything that was left. Renaud told us in the morning there was absolutely nothing to be taken back except the dishes.

"Although we were very tired, we did not sleep well during the night, owing to the noise that was made in the courtyard. There was a fire in the center of the yard,

and around it were gathered not only our own people, but a good many others, who kept up a continuous stream of talking from sunset to sunrise. Our camels were in the courtyard, and so were our horses. The latter were picketed rather too close together for quietness, and every little while they would indulge in a kicking and squealing match in order to keep their limbs from rusting. There was no door to our apartment, and so we hung up a part of our tent as a curtain. This improvised curtain was not thick enough to keep out the noise, or even to refine it; however, we managed to get a little sleep, though not as much as any of us wanted.

“We lifted our curtain at a reasonably early hour in the morning, but, early as it was, we found the courtyard well filled with visitors. Some of the agha’s servants and officers were in the courtyard, and one of the latter went to notify his chief that our door was open. He came in about half an hour, accompanied by his brother, the kadi of the city, and three or four pipe-bearers. Quite a crowd of ragtag and bobtail followed them, all curious to get a peep at the foreigners, since very few whites other than French officers and soldiers have ever visited Waregla.

“A few English have been there, but, as far as we could ascertain, we were the first Americans. It was noised around that we came from America, and this intensified the curiosity to look at us. Very few of the people had any idea where America was. Some thought it was an island near Great Britain or France; others believed that it was situated somewhere in the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans, they didn’t know which. Geography is

very little taught in Arab countries, and, least of all, in the cities and towns of the Sahara. I doubt if one in twenty of the natives in Waregla ever heard of America before our arrival, and not one in a hundred ever heard of the United States.

“The agha was very polite and proposed that we should go on horseback to visit the city after we had taken breakfast. He suggested that it might not be safe for us to go alone, and that his brother, with several officers, would accompany us. The interview was rather a long one; in fact, it was a good deal longer than we wished it to be. All our conversation was carried on through Renaud, who was a very good interpreter; but etiquette required that he should wait until a question or suggestion was propounded before he could say anything. Sometimes there would be pauses of five or ten minutes when it was the agha's turn to speak, but his serenity was not disturbed in the least, and we began to wonder if he would ever go away. We wanted our breakfast, and, as the agha had intimated that it was being prepared for us, there was nothing to do but wait.

“The agha left a little before noon, his brother going with him. Shortly after their departure a large bowl of kouskous arrived and we sat down to eat it; we invited the kadi to join us, but he refused, though he asked to be permitted to remain and see us eat. We consented, and he looked on with the same curiosity that he might bestow on a cage of wild animals at their morning repast. A crowd of inferior Arabs thronged the doorway, several of them working their way into the room for the same reason

that the kadi remained; they wanted to see how the foreigners fed themselves.

“After breakfast, we started out upon the proposed excursion, accompanied by the kadi, several other officers, and about twenty soldiers or retainers, all mounted. It was rather an imposing cavalcade, and not a good arrangement for sight-seeing; we would have preferred going on foot, but this was vehemently opposed by the agha, who was afraid we might get into trouble. The letter which we brought from the governor of Biskra not only secured us the friendship and hospitality of the agha, but it also made him, in a certain sense, responsible for us. He knew that he would be severely blamed if we got into any trouble while in his care, and was, therefore, determined to keep us constantly under his protection.

“We found that the city had a triple circuit of walls, which were, generally, in a ruinous condition. The outer wall enclosed a broad, open space where cattle could be driven in, camels loaded and unloaded, and caravans made up. The middle walls were greatly dilapidated, and could have been torn down sufficiently to admit the passage of troops without difficulty. The inmost wall was surrounded by a broad, though not very deep ditch, which was lined at its edge with tamarisk and other bushes, and partly filled with salt water. All around the city were palm trees extending for a considerable distance in every direction. Renaud told us that the palm forest was formerly larger than it now is, owing to the partial depopulation of the town.

“Waregla contains about thirteen hundred houses, many

of which are uninhabited. The city is an old one, dating back more than a thousand years, and some say it had its beginning before the Christian era. In the last twenty-five years it has lost many of its inhabitants by emigration; they having been attracted to Biskra, Tuggurt, and the Mozabite cities, owing to the greater safety of those places from the depredations of hostile tribes, and the greater opportunities for making money.

“The city is reached by four gates through the inmost wall, and there is a bridge over the ditch at each of these gates. On each gateway and over all the doors of the houses we found Arabic inscriptions taken from the Koran, and we also observed that the architecture was decidedly Saracenic in character. Many of the streets consisted of arched passages, the arches being so low that we were frequently obliged to stoop our faces down to our horses’ necks to avoid hitting the stones above us.

“Through these passages we went mostly in single file, and on each side of us there were rows of people who wanted to see the strangers, and also wanted, many of them, to have their disputes settled by the kadi. The kadi reminded me of the American who said that he had a very busy time of it, as he managed a church, a saw-mill, and a gambling-house all at the same time. The kadi was obliged, simultaneously, to return the salutes of the people, settle quarrels and administer justice, and also be polite to his guests.

“It is the custom in Waregla, whenever the kadi or the agha appears in public, to appeal to him for the settlement of disputes, and very often the parties to the quarrel

make things very lively. At the corner of the souk, or market-place, the kadi was called upon to decide the ownership of a horse, the claimants, and also the animal, being present. The trial lasted about fifteen minutes, and the battle of words was so loud as to be audible all over the souk. We were not at all sorry for these interruptions, as they gave us a chance to look around at the crowd of people and the architecture of the buildings.

“The crowd in the market-place became so noisy and pressed upon us so closely that our escort was obliged to beat them off with sticks. When this happened, the kadi hurried up his administration of justice and got us out of the souk as quickly as possible. We were then taken to the ruins of the Kasbah, or palace of the sultan; it was the residence of the last sultan of Waregla, and since his deposition, some thirty years ago, the building has been allowed to go to ruin.

“I heard a good story, which is worth repeating, about the way the Wareglans came to have a sultan. For hundreds of years they were governed by an aristocracy, or Council of Notables, but they came to believe that the antiquity of their city entitled them to be ruled by a sultan; so they applied to the Emperor of Morocco to give them, as king, a descendant of Mohammed, the Prophet of Islam. At first the emperor refused, but, as the Wareglans continued obstinate, he offered to supply them with one of his sons if they would pay for him his weight in gold-dust. They were very anxious, and consented at once; he sent them one of his sons who weighed about three hundred pounds, having been fattened up for the occasion.

They accepted him, and paid in gold-dust, pound for pound, and then they built a palace for him, and gave him a large annual revenue.

“In more recent times the office of sultan of Waregla was not entirely an autocratic one; the council of notables had the prerogative of deposing the sultan whenever they liked, but they notified him of his deposition in a very delicate way. It was the custom for a band of musicians to perform in front of his private apartments every morning at the hour of prayer. If they omitted at any time to do so, it was understood to be the signal for the sultan to retire into private life and make way for his successor.

“One of the most interesting parts of the city that we visited was the Hebrew quarter, which reminded us very much of the same locality at Tuggurt. In Waregla the Jews have their own streets and their own municipal organization, and they are not interfered with by the Mohammedans in any way as long as they pay their taxes and take no part in politics. They have a monopoly of working in gold and silver, and their products in this line are much like those of Tuggurt. We found among them some curious collections of old coins; among them were some coins of Castile, in Spain, before it was united with Arragon; they were irregular masses of silver, weighing an ounce, and stamped rather rudely with the arms of Castile and Leon. They had also some coins of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem, and some shekels of very ancient date. We tried to buy some of these coins, but did not succeed in purchasing a single one, owing to

the suspicion that they might not be genuine, and also because of the exorbitant prices demanded for them.

“These Hebrews of Waregla were very dark in color, darker a great deal than the Arabs, and almost as black as negroes. The doctor says that they resemble the Abyssinian Jews in their color, and also in their features, which are entirely Hebrew without the slightest trace of negro origin. The doctor says that the Jewish race forms a fine illustration of the effect of climate through many generations. Thus the Hebrews of northern Europe are generally blonde; those of middle Europe are between blonde and brunette; those of Spain and Portugal are distinct brunettes, while those of Africa, Southern Asia, and the Malay Islands are black; but all have the same features and their blood has been kept pure through many generations.

“We asked to be shown through the bazaars of Waregla, but were decidedly disappointed when we saw them. The bazaars are not extensive, and the supply of goods for sale there is neither large nor picturesque. Cotton cloths, cutlery, and other merchandise from France could be seen there, together with ostrich feathers and eggs, and skins of the deer, lion, panther, and other animals found in or near the desert. Evidently the people have little to buy with, and the keepers of the shops receive but little encouragement. The people have an indolent appearance, and Renaud tells us that they are quite satisfied to make a living without troubling themselves to lay up a provision for old age.”

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPLORING WAREGLA — HOME OF THE TUAREGS.

OUR friends spent several hours in exploring the streets and market-place, and looking in the shops of Waregla, and, though they were frequently closely pressed by the populace out of curiosity, they were not injured or insulted in any way, and at the end of their promenade they returned safe and sound to their quarters. Before taking leave of them, the kadi said he had been instructed to notify them that the agha desired the trio of Americans to dine with him. The doctor accepted on behalf of his young companions and himself, and said he would be ready when wanted. The kadi replied that an escort would come for them at the proper hour for dinner.

A little before sunset the agha's brother, accompanied by two officers, called at the lodgings of the strangers, and after a brief pause announced that he had come to take them to dinner. The doctor had ordered pipes and coffee immediately on their arrival, and time was taken to dispose of these refreshments before the party set out. The lodgings of our friends were so near the agha's residence that saddle horses were quite unnecessary, but, nevertheless, etiquette required that the journey should not be made on foot. The escorting party came on horseback, and as Renaud understood well the customs of the place, he had

the horses of the doctor and his nephews saddled and waiting. It took but a moment to reach the agha's residence, where the party dismounted and the animals were led away.

The strangers were ushered into the agha's presence and were cordially received. Glasses of what Ned concluded must be sherbet were passed around, and etiquette required that it should be swallowed. Harry said that the liquor tasted more like water colored and sweetened than anything else, and Renaud told him afterwards that he had guessed the situation very fairly. As before stated, the Moslems do not drink wine, at least, not in public, being forbidden to do so by their religion. Consequently their strongest beverages are very mild when regarded from an occidental point of view.

At the first opportunity Ned asked Renaud how sherbet was made.

"It is nothing more nor less," replied Renaud, "than the juice of fruits mixed with water and diluted to a condition of weakness. After the fruit juices and water are mixed, the composition is sweetened just as we sweeten lemonade."

"In other words," said Ned, "sherbet is simply lemonade made with the juices of fruits instead of lemon juice."

"Exactly so," responded the Frenchman, "and if there is any difference it is that sherbet is much weaker than our lemonade. One might drink a gallon of it and not feel any ill consequences in the way of headache or other malady; as for intoxication, all the lakes of Switzerland made into sherbet would not contain enough alcohol to make anybody stagger."

After the sherbet, dinner was announced. The host led the way into another apartment, where the party sat, or squatted, on the floor around a low table, the doctor being at the side of the agha, while the agha's brother and another officer took the part of special hosts to the two youths. Dates and camel's milk formed the first course, a roasted sheep the second, and kouskousou the third. Before they began eating, a servant came with a basin and a pitcher of brass, the pitcher having a long spout like that of a teapot, and about half an inch in diameter at the end. The basin was held under the hands of each of the party, while water was poured over them; then the hands were dried on a large and soft towel, and one after another of the party gave evidence to all the rest that his hands were perfectly clean. This is a ceremony which always precedes a Moslem dinner. Between every two courses the hands are washed, and not infrequently the host calls for the washing equipments while a course is being eaten.

As already stated, a Moslem dinner is eaten with the fingers, and consequently the process of frequently washing the hands becomes necessary. It removes all suspicion of soiled fingers and renders much less disagreeable the practice of the host using his own fingers to put choice morsels into the mouth of his guest. When a sheep is roasted whole and placed before the dinner party, it must be torn in pieces with the fingers, and the diners would have a considerable amount of grease on hand at the end of the meal, were it not for the frequent washing.

The meal proceeded with little interruption, and the pauses between the courses were brief. There was not

much conversation during the dinner, as there was no interpreter present, and the agha's stock of French was about equal to the Arabic of our friends. The doctor and the youths had been careful to learn as many complimentary words and phrases in Arabic as they could, and they made liberal use of their stock of knowledge as the dinner progressed. The agha seemed greatly pleased at the terms of satisfaction in which they spoke of the dinner, and at each expression of admiration he pressed them to eat more. Ned whispered to Harry that it would be well for them to cease their commendations, or they would be compelled to eat to repletion. Harry took the hint, and the latter portion of the dinner was somewhat more subdued than the early part.

When the dinner was over the party returned to the reception-room, where they were served with pipes and coffee. Soon after these were finished the agha rose as an intimation that the affair was at an end. Then our friends bowed themselves out and found their horses waiting at the door. Renaud had received the hint from the agha's servants and brought the horses around just in time.

Before our friends left the agha's house they were invited to go on a hunting expedition on the following day, and of course they accepted. They were to take breakfast with the agha, and start with him in the pursuit of the game; the agha said he would notify them when to come to breakfast by sending his brother to escort them.

"I wonder what kind of a hunt it is to be," said Ned. "Are we to take our rifles, or shotguns, or will the agha furnish the weapons?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Harry. "Let's go and ask the doctor."

The question was referred to the doctor, whose answer was similar to that of Harry's. He did not know what kind of a hunt was intended.

Then Renaud was summoned, but he was equally ignorant.

"But I'll go and see some of the agha's servants and find out," said Renaud.

Off went the faithful Frenchman, and soon returned. As he entered the apartment, the three Americans turned their faces towards him with an inquisitive air.

"The agha is going to show you a style of hunting which may be new to you," said Renaud, raising his hand with a military salute.

"Well, which is it to be — shotguns or rifles?" queried Ned.

"Neither of them," Renaud replied. "You are to hunt with falcons, and not carry anything at all."

"Won't that be jolly?" exclaimed Harry. "Hunting with falcons just as though we were carried back three or four centuries. I'm very glad to hear that."

"So am I," said the doctor, and Ned echoed his opinion.

"There's one thing that you may be certain of," said the doctor, "and that is we shall have very little to do except look on."

"Looking on at a hunt with falcons will be a great treat," said Ned, "as it is entirely new. I wonder what kind of game we will go for."

“That depends a good deal on the kind that presents itself,” said the doctor quietly. “To the average hunter anything is game that comes along, just as the old adage says about fishermen :

“ ‘ All is fish that cometh to net.’ ”

“I believe the bustard is the favorite quarry, but the eagle, ostrich, or gazelle is by no means unwelcome. We’ll see what the day will bring forth.”

Renaud was then dismissed, and after the youths had written up their journals they went to bed, whither the doctor had gone before them. They slept better that night than on the preceding one, as there was less tumult in the courtyard, owing to the largely diminished number of visitors. The kadi had received from Renaud information of the annoyance of the preceding night, and gave a gentle hint to his followers to stay away from the courtyard from sunset to sunrise.

The party assembled for the hunt the next morning in good season, after a simple breakfast consisting chiefly of kouskousou. The falcons were objects of great interest to our young friends, who examined them at a respectful distance, out of regard for the sharp claws of the birds. There were three falcons belonging to the agha, but whether they comprised his entire stock of hunting birds we are unable to say.

Ned plied Renaud with questions concerning the falcon, and learned that these birds are bolder than eagles and also stronger. They frequently attack and kill eagles, and the falcon has been known to fly in twenty-four hours a distance of thirteen hundred and fifty miles, from Paris

to Malta. These birds do not fly at night, as they are guided by their vision, and consequently their speed must have been nearly, if not quite, a hundred miles an hour.

We will listen to Ned while he tells the story of the hunting excursion.

“No agha or sheikh of high degree ever goes far from home, whether for business, war, or pleasure, without being accompanied by his falcons and their keepers. The chief falconer is an officer of no small rank, and he is usually one of the confidential lieutenants of the agha. In this case he receives great deference from all the other attendants upon Sidi Zobeir, and rides close behind him, with one falcon on his wrist, one on his shoulder, and another on the top of his head. The hood of each falcon is kept over his eyes at all times during the march, and is only removed when he is to be ‘cast’ or sent after game.

“The agha announced that we were going in pursuit of the bustard, and after getting outside the city we turned in a southerly direction. The southern end of the oasis dwindles from a broad forest of luxuriant palm trees to a very sparse and thin growth; beyond this there are little patches and dots which contain a few date palms, the whole terminating in a marsh and isolated places with very little vegetable growth of any account. Harry said that it reminded him of a road somewhere in the Western States which began in a grand avenue with a double row of shade trees, and gradually dwindled, until it became a squirrel track and ran up a tree. This end of the oasis is the haunt of the bustard, and it was there we went to hunt the bird.

“Every eye was watching keenly as we approached the place where our game was supposed to be concealed. By and by somebody caught sight of a bustard and gave the signal. The falcon on the wrist of the chief falconer was transferred to the hand of his master, the agha. The whole procession came to a halt immediately; then the agha, after receiving the falcon, beckoned to the doctor and ourselves to accompany him. We went perhaps thirty or forty yards, and then the agha removed the hood from the bird’s head, and threw him in the direction of the bustard, though before doing so he directed the attention of the falcon to the game.

“A great deal of skill is required in this performance, as the bustard is apt to take to its wings if it sees the falcon at all before the latter is well in the air above him. To kill a bustard on the wing is considered very disreputable, and there are hunters who would put to death a hunting bird which would make such a miserable mistake. Stories are told of Arab sheikhs and other great men who have been so enraged at the unsportsmanlike conduct of their falcons that they have put to death the birds and also their trainers.

“Our falcons had evidently been well trained. The first one that the agha sent out rose to a great height directly above the bustard; then it swooped down through the air, making feints towards the bustard until the latter took to its legs, instead of its wings. The falcon then poised itself above the bustard, while a second one was flung off by the agha. The bustard ran at a great pace, the two pursuers urging him on, and whenever the intended

victim tried to take to its wings the falcons prevented its doing so by swooping down towards him.

“He ran so fast that we, with our horses at a gallop, could barely keep up with him. The falcons hung over him at the height of only a few yards, and at every attempt he made to use his wings they made a feint at him. The most difficult part of training a falcon is in teaching him to keep on making these feints until the game is nearly exhausted. When the bustard shows that his strength is about gone the fatal swoop is made, and the bird immediately drops dead on the ground, its backbone being pierced by the claws of the falcon.

“Renaud explained to us that the bustard has a singular way of defending himself. When the falcon comes near him the bustard ejects a slimy liquid from his mouth at his pursuer; if it hits the falcon it impedes his flight and discourages him a great deal. A shrewd and well-trained falcon plays with his prey, inducing him to eject this defensive liquid, but carefully avoiding it, until the bustard's supply of moisture is exhausted. We must have pursued the bustard four or five miles before he was secured, and our horses were pretty well blown when the fatal stroke was given.

“We caught three bustards and as many sand-grouse during our hunt. We saw some gazelles a considerable distance away, but did not attempt to attack them, as our horses were tired out and unfit for any further severe work that day. I learned from Renaud that the Arab shiekhs are not very fond of hunting the gazelle, for the reason that the sport is liable to be the death of the falcon, as he runs

the risk of being impaled on the horns of the animal when making the last swoop. It is not infrequently the case when gazelles are hunted in this way that beast and bird fall dead at the same stroke, the former being killed by the claws of the falcon, and the latter impaled on the animal's horns.

“The sport of falconry with the Arabs is practically the same as that practised in England when falconry was a fashionable amusement, the same gloves and hoods being used, and also the same care in feeding, and the same method of training. The prices of the birds are higher than I supposed they would be; Renaud told me that a good falcon is worth 1,000 francs (\$200), and not infrequently 1,500 francs have been refused for a single well-trained bird. The falcon is considered to be the equivalent of a thoroughbred horse and the Arabs exchange the one for the other. Falcons usually have a regular stable set apart for them, and they are groomed and looked after carefully, as are the favorite horses of their owners.

“After our hunt was over, we halted under the shade of some date palms, partly to rest our horses and partly to satisfy the appetites which our ride had given us. One of the attendants brought along a quantity of dates, and these formed our repast. They were the sweetest we had ever tasted, and, on remarking this, the agha told us the story of their origin, which was duly translated by Renaud. Here it is:—

“‘There was an old woman once, old and without children, who was very pious. She wanted to make a pil-

grimage to Mecca, but was too poor to do so ; she was so poor that she had not even money enough to buy a string of beads, and so she gathered some date stones, bored holes in them, and formed them into a chaplet. With these beads she repeated her prayers daily and hourly, and frequently visited the tomb of a holy man, where she begged the prophet that he would not charge her poverty as a crime, but admit her to the same place in paradise to which she would have been entitled if she had made the visit to Mecca. When she died her friends buried with her the chaplet of stones, the only earthly thing that she possessed. The spirit of the prophet visited the grave, and the tears he shed over it germinated the stones, and they sprang into a group of trees, which produced the sweetest dates ever known.'

“ ‘And these are some of them,’ said the agha, as he ended his story.

“The Arabs say they have fifteen kinds of dates, some of them being the best for eating fresh, some for drying and cooking, and others best for preserving in sugar, as some dates are preserved. The cultivation and curing of dates is an art requiring considerable skill. The dates of Waregla are of several kinds, but I don't think the whole fifteen varieties can be found there. It is a curious fact that, though the date-palm requires considerable water at its feet, the crop is injured and sometimes wholly destroyed in case of a heavy fall of rain before the dates are ripe.

“They brought us a liquor made from the juices of the palm tree ; it is called ‘laguna,’ and the Arabs are very fond of it, but to our taste it seemed very sweet and in-

sidid. It is obtained by making an incision in the top of the tree and attaching a funnel by which the sap flows into a jug. About ten quarts will be obtained every morning in this way, and the operation is said to be beneficial to sickly or poorly yielding trees, provided it is not too long continued; in the latter case the tree is killed."

The next day our friends went outside the city to visit a Tuareg encampment among the palm groves. The first object to attract their attention was a group of beautiful white camels, such as have already been mentioned, but the ones that they saw that day were larger than any which the youths had yet encountered. Ned remarked jestingly that he would like to own one. Renaud, thinking he was in earnest, answered that it would be impossible for him to do so; first, because the Tuaregs would not sell one of the "mahari" at any price, and, secondly, because the animal could not live in the colder regions of the coast.

Ned replied that if such was the case he would not try to make a purchase, but he could not help admiring these beautiful creatures, which were as large as they were handsome. Renaud told him that the largest of ordinary camels were not as tall as the mahari by at least eighteen inches, and whenever groups of the two kinds were together the ordinary camels looked like dwarfs. Renaud further said that great care was used in breeding and training the mahari, that they were very docile, far more so than the ordinary camel, and seem to take pleasure in obeying the commands of their masters. They lie down, rise, turn, and quicken or slacken their pace at the voice

of their rider, and this is the case with no other kind of camel.

The youths were interested in finding that most of the tents of the Tuaregs were made of leather, — the untanned hides of goats or antelopes, stretched while green and then stitched together. Ned and Harry went inside one of the tents, and found it considerably cooler than a canvas one, but it was so low as to compel them to stoop uncomfortably. The Tuaregs that they saw were dressed quite differently from the Arabs, each man having a long tuft of hair on the top of his head, only the temples and the back of the head being shaved.

The Tuareg wears cotton trousers with a long flowing robe of black cotton or wool, which is held at the waist by a broad belt of leather. Outside of this he wears a striped or blue cloak without sleeves, and on his head he wears a very high red cap with a black turban around it. One of these ends is brought down over the face and fastened with an ivory pin so that only the eyes are visible. When at meals, the Tuareg never takes off this veil, but holds it away from his mouth with one hand. In wearing veils the Tuareg custom is exactly the reverse of that of most other Mohammedans. In nearly all Moslem countries women are veiled, but men are not; with the Tuaregs the men wear veils, while the women go unveiled. To expose the face is considered a degradation; the Tuaregs, like most Orientals, regard women as inferior beings, and it is probably to mark their inferiority that the veil is forbidden to women.

Harry observed that the most dignified and apparently

the most wealthy of the Tuaregs were barefooted, and he learned in answer to his inquiries on this subject that only those who are too poor to ride wear any covering on their feet, so that it is a mark of superiority in position and property to go barefooted. Some of the poorer Tuaregs, Ned observed, were wearing coverings on their feet which seemed to be permanent attachments. They were simply the skins of sheep, goats, or other animals, put on when wet, and then stitched together; they shrink while drying, and cannot be removed until worn out and ripped apart. Harry suggested that possibly these men were born with boots on, or, at any rate, he couldn't help thinking so when he looked at them, to which Ned replied that they probably died with their boots on.

The chief of the Tuaregs received our friends very cordially, and invited them to make a journey into the Tuareg country. They gave the assurance that the travelers would be unmolested, inasmuch as they had a safe-conduct from the French governor at Biskra, and proposed that he would bring them a special safe-conduct from the Tuareg sheikh of that region. The youths were ready enough to accept the invitation, but the doctor said their route was in another direction.

The Tuaregs claim a wide extent of country, practically all that lies between Morocco on the west and Lake Chad on the east, while their northern boundary may be placed on the parallel of latitude through Waregla and the southern one near that of Timbuctoo, or along the bank of the Niger. The headquarters of their principal clan seems to be an isolated group of mountains, about fifteen long

days' journey southwest from Wareglá. These mountains are said to be well wooded and watered, but no foreigner has ever been there to describe the region, neither has any of the Arabs other than the Tuaregs. All caravans carefully avoid the haunts of these robbers, and as for single travelers, they value their lives and property at too high a price to risk them where the Tuaregs abound. They describe their region as a productive one, and the mountains must be of considerable height, as their upper portions are covered with pines and other coniferous trees. This fact does not rest alone on the word of the Tuaregs, but is established by the use of resinous woods in the manufacture of their saddles and other equipments.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE ROAD — CURING A SHEIKH.

HAVING exhausted the curiosities of Waregla and recruited the strength of their camels and horses, our friends prepared to move on. They laid in a supply of water sufficient to take them to the next wells on their route, and also a stock of barley for the horses, and a goodly quantity of dates for themselves and the camels. As already stated, the camel derives its subsistence chiefly from the bushes and shrubs that grow in the desert, but when these are too scarce in quantity the faithful beast must be fed. He will eat dates and is fond of them, and will even eat the stones of the dates without any of the “meat.” Whenever our friends made a meal from the dates they saved the stones for the camels. Ned said it reminded him of a traveler who was hard up for provisions at one time, but managed to save himself and his dog by cutting off the dog’s tail and making soup of it for himself, and then giving the bone to the dog.

Dr. Whitney intimated one morning to the agha that he and his party would leave on the following day. In the afternoon the agha came to make a visit, accompanied by his brother, the kadi, several other officers, his pipe-bearer, coffee-bearer, and other attendants. The doctor made farewell presents to each of the party; the

presents consisting of handkerchiefs, sashes, scissors, pocket-knives, and a pistol, the last being for the agha himself. Renaud at the same time distributed money among the servants of the agha, and when the whole business was ended the travelers found that it was an expensive luxury to be the guest of a great man.

"It's all very nice," said Ned to Harry when their visitors had departed, "to be treated as hospitably as we have been, but the day of reckoning is a serious one."

"You will find it the same in most Moslem countries," said the doctor. "You are treated with a great deal of distinction when properly introduced; horses and camels, escorts of soldiers, and the like, are placed at your disposal, and you have a first-rate time, but everybody expects a present when you are about to leave, and his expectations are gauged rather by the importance of his employer than the amount of service he has rendered."

Before leaving our friends the agha called to his brother for a sheet of paper which was handed to the kadi, and the latter wrote upon it a letter which the agha dictated. In writing he placed the paper in the palm of his left hand, holding the reed-pen in his right, and moistening the latter with ink from a bottle shaped somewhat like the sheath of a knife, and carried in his girdle. After writing the letter he handed it over to the agha, who read it and then called for his seal.

Another functionary then stepped forward with a leather bag, which the agha unlocked very ceremoniously with a key that he produced from the folds of his garments. Out of this bag he took a seal, which very much resembled

a silver dollar fixed in a wooden handle. The seal was handed to the kadi, who moistened his fingers with ink which he rubbed on the seal, and then handed back to the agha. The latter pressed it on the paper, and this formality completed the document, which was a letter of commendation to the chief authority at the next oasis. The agha also supplied our friends with four horsemen who were to accompany them the first two or three days of their journey, or until they were out of immediate danger. The doctor had not asked for this guard, but was unable to decline it, as he realized that the agha was responsible for the safety of the party as long as they were in any part of his district.

By daylight the next morning the horses and camels were ready in the courtyard, and the loads were placed on the animals as quickly as possible. It always takes longer to get under way the first time after a few days' halt than when the caravan is on the route, and so it proved in this case. It was necessary to make several alterations in the distribution of the loads for the camels, and, besides, some of the beasts were inclined to be refractory. They had enjoyed the good things of Waregla, and were unwilling to leave the place. They knew very well that packing up meant a journey over the desert, and consequently they made a protest at receiving their burdens. One camel, when laden, absolutely refused to rise in spite of repeated cudgelings on the tenderest portions of the body. Finally the chief camel driver brought him to his feet by taking off from his burden a small package weighing not over ten pounds and transferring it to the back of

another camel; then the refractory beast rose at once to his feet, and behaved himself with proper docility.

We may remark here that this performance on the part of a camel is by no means infrequent; he will make a great fuss and absolutely refuse to rise when loaded, but if ever so slight a portion is taken off his burden, or even a pretence of taking it off is made, he rises at once to his feet, and seems perfectly contented.

The caravan filed out of the city and soon reached the edge of the palm groves and gardens of the oasis. The next destination of the party was Gadames, a city about fourteen days' journey to the southeast, and in that direction the head of the caravan was turned. Both Ned and Harry kept records of this part of the journey and there was a good-natured competition between them as to which should have the more complete account. We will listen to Ned as he tells the story of their adventures.

"We have a new guide who is accompanying us to Gadames, and then watch his chance to return with a caravan. Renaud is not acquainted with the route from Temacin to Gadames, and, therefore, an additional guide was desirable. He is a Mozabite, a traveler by profession, and has been in all parts of the desert, and he is a handsome, dashing fellow, with the reputation of being a good shot. Evidently he wants to show us some of his skill, as he keeps ahead of the caravan, examines every mound and bush in search of a foe, and appears somewhat disappointed at finding nothing. His name is Selim; he has another name, which we did not try to grasp, the one word Selim being quite enough for our purpose. He carries a

rifle with a long barrel and a flint-lock, and whenever he discharges the weapon there is a very perceptible interval of time between the flash in the pan and the report of the gun. Renaud says the way to handle such a gun as that is to fire first and then take aim. In addition to the rifle, he carries a large dagger and an antiquated pistol, and he explains that the latter has been an heirloom in the family for over a hundred years. Harry thought the pistol would be quite as dangerous to the man aiming it as to the one it was aimed at, but we did not venture to express our opinion so that Selim would know of it.

“By Selim’s direction, we camped the first night in a valley between two hills. There were signs of moisture in one spot in the valley, and Selim said that water might be obtained there by digging. As we had an abundant supply of water for ourselves and horses, and the camels had taken a hearty drink before leaving the Oued Ghir, we did not go to the trouble of making a well.

“A guard was stationed immediately after camp was formed, and changed at regular intervals during the night. Selim took the first watch, Renaud the second, and Harry and I the third and fourth. By arranging it in this way we were not obliged to make use of any of our attendants, nor did we wish to do so after our experience with them as sentinels.

“In the afternoon of the third day we spied some palm trees from the crest of the ridge, and learned from Selim that we were approaching the oasis, to the chief of which we had a letter of introduction. Before reaching it, we passed through a large cemetery filled with tombs of a

construction that we had never before seen. They were low and flat, about eight feet by four, and most of them were decorated with pinnacles about two feet high; one at each of the corners, and one at each of the sides, midway from the ends. Each of these pinnacles was surmounted with an ostrich egg, and some of the graves were ornamented with bunches of black ostrich feathers. These tombs were in the barren ground outside of the oasis, as tillable soil in the desert is altogether too precious to be used either for burial or building purposes.

“The oasis straggled over a large extent of ground, and the indications are that it has been much more extensive and flourishing than it is now. The roots of many of the palm trees are covered with sand; the water that nourishes them is so conveyed that it sinks into the sand and thus gives life to the roots of the trees. The oasis is not, like most others, a single patch of fertile earth, but consists of a great number of small patches, some of them a hundred yards and more from their nearest neighbors. The water is mostly salt, the wells that supply it being quite shallow, not more than ten or twenty feet in depth.

“We sent our guide ahead with our letter of recommendation to the sheikh, and when we reached the town we were met at the gate by the kadi, who wished to lodge us inside the town, but we preferred to camp among the palm trees. To this the kadi reluctantly assented, and showed us a place where we could pitch our tents. We formed our camp, and then accompanied the kadi through the town, which Harry afterwards described as a pocket edition of Tuggurt, as it is smaller in the number

of houses and inhabitants, and is much more dilapidated. The inhabitants were darker in color, the negroes were in greater proportion, and there was quite as much curiosity to see the strangers; flocks of sheep and goats were numerous outside the town, and we had no difficulty in buying a sheep for our dinner. We had it roasted in the manner already described, and this with a bowl of kous-kousou, and some stewed dates, comprised our evening meal.

“The sheikh came in after dinner, and his first request was for a letter showing that we had been hospitably treated. Renaud wrote the letter in the best Arabic of which he was capable; it was much better than any of us could have written, but from an Arab point of view I'm afraid it was not a fine piece of composition. Renaud expressed a doubt as to whether the commandant at Tug-gurt would be able to read it, but he thought he might make out its purport, and said it was composed of the most flattering phrases he could think of.

“In looking after our welfare, the sheikh did not forget our camels and horses, which were well supplied with fodder. He also gave us a letter to the sheikh of the next oasis, and thus assured us of a friendly reception. We rewarded his kindness by suitable presents, and made a good start in the morning.

“We kept up the practice of fixing our position every day by observation,” continued Ned in his journal, “although there was no necessity for our doing so; from Temacin we have traveled to the southeast, and every day our observations have shown a little less latitude and a

little more longitude. I wonder when, if ever, we will get to where there is no latitude whatever.

“Renaud had the misfortune on the second day of our journey to be stung by a scorpion. We were all greatly alarmed when we heard of it, as we had the impression that the scorpion’s bite is generally fatal, and the death of this very faithful and useful Frenchman would have been a severe calamity to us; in fact, if Renaud had died I half believe that we would have given up the journey, unless we could have found a good man in his place.

“Renaud took the occurrence very coolly, and the means of cure he adopted reminded me of the old saying that ‘the hair of the dog is good for the bite.’ He took the scorpion that had bitten him and crushed it, and then he spread it as a poultice over the bite. He said it was the best cure known for the bite of the scorpion, and certainly it proved a perfect one in his case. The foot where he received the bite began to swell immediately, but within fifteen minutes of the time he applied the scorpion poultice the swelling began to subside, and before the day was over all trace of the bite had disappeared. It is certainly a very curious mode of treatment, but, after Renaud’s experience, I shall certainly try it in case I am bitten by one of these creatures.

“In discussing the matter with Renaud I find that the bite of the scorpion is not generally fatal; there are several kinds of scorpions, and they vary considerably in their poisonous character. At a casual glance, the scorpion might be taken for a crawfish, as his body is of the same general shape as the body of that crustacean. When he

is moving about quietly and undisturbed his tail sticks out straight behind, but when alarmed, or irritated, or running fast, he holds his tail over his back, moving it in all directions, as if well aware of the power of his sting and ready for any adversary. Scorpions are found all over the Sahara; we have seen a good many of them, but this is the first time that any of our party has been bitten by one. The largest of the scorpions are about six inches long, but usually they are not more than three or four inches. The civilized treatment of the scorpion bite is to press the wound on all sides so as to force out as much of the poison as possible, and then administer ammonia internally, and also apply it freely on and around the wound.

“We have kept a careful watch every night, but are all glad to say that we have not been disturbed. One night we went into camp in a small valley where there were indications of previous encampments. During the night we thought we heard a commotion in another part of the valley, but as the wind was blowing briskly at the time, we could not hear distinctly, and were unable to make out the cause of the disturbance, or be certain that any had occurred. In the morning we found that we had neighbors, and not altogether welcome ones. One of our camel drivers said that the encampment, which was about half a mile away, was unmistakably Tuareg, and as the party was more numerous than ours, we were in some danger, at least, of an attack.

“The doctor thought it would be well for us to make the first approach, in order to place ourselves on amicable terms with these marauders of the desert. Accordingly,

we sent our chief mekhashni (camel driver) a hundred yards or so ahead of the camp, to a little hill at the edge of the valley, where he was in full view of the strangers. He took possession of the hill and then waved his burnous in token of friendship. I may remark here that there are several ways of waving this garment, and each particular way has a certain significance. It may indicate friendship, enmity, or neutrality; it indicates the way one is going, or the way whence he has come; in fact, it has almost as many meanings as the signal flag or semaphore telegraph.

“In a few minutes after our men had taken the position mentioned, and given the signal of friendship, we saw one of the Tuaregs approach in the direction of the hill; then our camel driver went forward to meet him, and the meeting took place about half way between the two camps. The interview lasted about five minutes, and then each man turned in the direction of his own camp.

“When our mekhashni returned he confirmed our belief that the strange party was Tuareg. He had informed the man whom he met that we had a French safe-conduct among the Tuaregs, and learned in turn that the sheikh of the party was severely ill, and in need of the attentions of a hakeem (doctor). He asked if there was a hakeem in our party, and on learning that there was he seemed to be much rejoiced.

“Harry and I thought it was a fortunate circumstance for us, but not for the unfortunate sheikh, that he had taken ill, as it would give Dr. Whitney a chance to show his skill, and thereby gain the friendship of the Tuaregs,

or, at any rate, of this party. The doctor, however, did not regard the occurrence as favorably as we did.

“ ‘It is all right,’ said he, ‘if I can treat the fellow and cure him, but all wrong if he should happen to die on my hands.’

“ ‘Like all savage people,’ remarked the doctor, ‘these Tuaregs look upon a foreign doctor as a magician, or something very near it, and they expect, as a matter of course, that he can perform miracles. I have been asked more than once to restore a hand or foot that had been cut off, and many are the times when people who had been blind for years have been brought to me to have their sight restored. I don’t exactly like the job of undertaking to cure this Tuareg sheikh, but of course I can’t refuse, and we will hope for the best.’

“The doctor got out his medicine case, and ordered his horse, together with Renaud and his mule. Harry and I wanted to go, but Renaud thought it best that we should remain at the camp for the present. The doctor and Renaud mounted and started for the Tuareg camp, Renaud carrying the medicine case and acting as the doctor’s orderly, or chief of staff.

“Arrived at the camp, they were taken into the presence of the sheikh, who was lying on a pile of skins and rugs in one of the camel’s-hair tents, of which there were several. The doctor felt the pulse of the sick man, but did not dare to ask to see his tongue or face, as a request of that sort would not be likely to be taken in good part. The Tuareg man, as already stated, is greatly averse to showing his face. Renaud acted as interpreter, and in a

very short time the doctor made a satisfactory diagnosis of the case and dealt out the necessary medicine.

“He measured it with great exactness, and gave careful instructions to the skeikh’s son, an intelligent youth about eighteen years old. The young man asked with considerable anxiety how soon his father would be cured. Observe the form of the inquiry; it was not whether the man would get well, but how soon he would do so; the question implying that, as he was in the hands of a foreign hakeem, his recovery was a matter of course.

“The Tuaregs treated the doctor and Renaud with great civility. They learned through the latter that the doctor had come without waiting for breakfast, and though they did not invite them to remain for that meal, they sent to our camp a good breakfast of kouskous, stewed dates, and fresh camel’s milk, which arrived before the doctor returned. There was breakfast enough for half a dozen men, and the kouskous was of excellent quality; certainly, we had seen none better in our travels thus far.

“‘I think we’ve scored a hit,’ said the doctor gaily, as he entered our tent immediately after he had dismounted. Harry and I exclaimed, almost in the same breath, that we were glad that he had done so, and then Harry asked what was the matter with the sheikh.

“‘Nothing at all serious,’ was the reply. ‘A severe turn of what you boys have undoubtedly experienced after overfeeding on green apples or unripe melons. He’ll be well in a few hours; I told him I would stay by him until he was out of danger and ready to travel again. He seemed very grateful for my offer, as he evidently thought

himself a great deal sicker than he is. Renaud has found out that the Tuareg caravan is traveling in the same direction that we are, and I think I have secured it as an escort for the rest of the route.'

"And this is the way it turned out; the sheikh got well by noon, or, at least, well enough to travel. The doctor visited him at that hour, and found that he was able to walk about and in a perfect ecstasy of delight at the absence of pain in his digestive regions. He asked the doctor to travel in his company, and said they would escort us to Gadames and regulate their pace to suit ours. Of course the offer was accepted, and in a little while both caravans had broken camp and taken to the road again.

"Needless to say that for the rest of the way to Gadames we had no occasion to keep a guard at night. The Tuareg encampment was formed around ours, or close to it, and that was all the police force that we needed. There were about fifty men altogether in their party, with as many camels; their camels were lightly laden, and whenever any of our camels showed signs of giving out, their burdens were transferred to the backs of the Tuareg beasts. We were treated just as kindly as men could be in the desert, and could ask for no better companions."

"The far-off reader of this journal may think it strange that we entrusted ourselves entirely in the hands of such notorious robbers as the Tuaregs. An inference of this sort shows a lack of knowledge of the Tuareg character, and, moreover, of Arab character in general. The Arab

will defend his guest with his life; he might rob and even kill the same man if he met him in the open desert, but when they are in the relation of host and guest the life and property of the latter are as safe as in the best regulated cities of England or America. If our camp had been attacked at any time while we were traveling with these Tuaregs they would have defended us as long as they could have raised a hand to strike a blow. There is an old adage which declares that there is honor among thieves; there is honor among the Tuaregs, and plenty of it, too, in their treatment of each other, and in their dealings with outsiders they are the most honorable thieves that can be found.

“Harry and I were regarded as magicians quite as much as the doctor was, and how do you suppose we obtained our reputation? Well, this is the way of it:—

“The first morning that we were in camp with the Tuaregs we took an observation for longitude, and great was the wonder of our new friends as they gathered about us to observe the manipulation of the instruments. They had never before seen anything of the kind, and when Renaud came around to where we were they plied him with questions. He explained the purport of our work, and in order to have them understand it clearly, he spread out a map of the desert, on which we had marked our positions each day, just as mariners mark their positions on a chart. From that time on we were regarded as beings of no ordinary consequence; and whenever we took an observation we invariably had an interested crowd of spectators.

“ Their astonishment is remarkable, in view of the fact that the Tuaregs, like all other wandering tribes of Arabs, have a certain knowledge of astronomy, though it is of a rude sort. They can judge very well of their latitude by observing the height of the north star above the horizon, and this same star gives them the points of the compass very accurately. They made a compass, one evening, by taking a piece of string and laying it flat upon the ground in a due north and south position, by pointing one end of it directly at the north star; then they laid another string across the first, exactly at right angles, so as to indicate east and west; they next subdivided the spaces between the cardinal points by laying other strings across, and continued to subdivide until they had the thirty-two points of compass, exactly like our own.

“ When they had completed their work we placed one of our compasses on the ground beside this improvised one, and found that theirs was constructed with perfect accuracy. The position of the sun in the daytime is also taken as a guide, and they can guess with remarkable accuracy the hour of the day. Altogether, they have a pretty fair stock of astronomical knowledge, when we consider that their education is of a very limited character, their instructions being almost wholly confined to reading and reciting passages from the Koran.

“ In order to restore the sheikh to good health, Dr. Whitney desired him to take a small quantity of spirits, but the patient objected very emphatically. He was a devout Moslem, and it was contrary to his religion to drink anything intoxicating. Consequently, the doctor

changed his prescription, and mixed his medicine with a liquid of a more harmless character.

“The Tuaregs, like most other tribes of the desert, are very abstemious, and prohibitory laws, about which so much is being said in these times, have existed in the Sahara for more than a thousand years. This is not only the case with the wandering tribes, but also with the Mozabites and other settled people. In the Mozabite cities the Hebrews are the only people who make any use whatever of distilled liquors; their hakeems, or doctors, are the only ones who are allowed to have liquor in their possession, and they can only permit it to pass into the hands of others in cases of illness. They are absolutely forbidden to sell to other residents, and if a traveler desires to purchase a bottle of spirits he must first obtain a permit to do so, signed by the governor. These restrictions, it will be seen, are almost identical with those of the celebrated ‘Maine Liquor Law,’ and antedate them by more than ten centuries.”

CHAPTER X.

GADAMES — THE CARAVAN TRADE.

THE travelers reached Gadames without any further incidents of consequence, and went into camp outside the city, the Tuaregs encamping near them. Gadames is a solitary town or city in an oasis of the same name, about three hundred and ten miles southwest of Tripoli, in latitude $30^{\circ} 51'$ north, and longitude $8^{\circ} 24' 23''$ east. It is a great caravan center, and the rendezvous of merchants from Tripoli, Tuggurt, Fezzan Touat, Timbuctoo, and other points.

The population of Gadames is variously estimated from thirty-five hundred to five thousand; it varies from time to time, according to the prosperity or dulness of trade. It consists of Arabs and negroes, who are divided into two factions, and sometimes three or four, that are frequently at war with one another. The oasis in which the city stands is extensive, and the palm trees, which produce an excellent quality of dates, are very numerous. The streets are narrow, and many of them are covered with arches. The walls of the buildings are thick, and serve to keep out the heat of summer and the cold of winter. The city has triple walls, which are of little practical use as they are in a very ruinous condition.

“After forming our camp,” said Harry, “we rode into

the town under the guidance of Selim, who had been there before. He took us directly to the great square which is in full view of the entrance gate, and is the place where all transactions of the merchants are carried on. In the center of the square there is a copious and steadily flowing spring which supplies the principal part of the water used in Gadames. Around this spring there are troughs from which animals can drink, and other troughs from which the natives fill their receptacles with water to carry to their homes. There is always quite a little crowd around the spring, and they afforded us interesting subjects of observation.

“The square is looked upon as a neutral ground, and the people of different factions can move around freely within its limits. Selim told us that the Arabs or negroes of one quarter are not allowed to penetrate another quarter under penalty of death, and that this custom had prevailed for hundreds of years. Most of the negroes are slaves of the Arabs, and have been brought from Timbuctoo, Fezzan, Agades, and other cities and regions of the country to the south and east of the great desert, but there is a considerable number of free negroes, who are on terms of equality with their Arab neighbors, and live peaceably with them.

“In the market-place we saw piles of goods on the ground, or in the shops and warehouses which surround the great square. A caravan had recently arrived from Tripoli, and another from Timbuctoo, and the merchants connected with these caravans were making an exchange of goods. The caravan from Timbuctoo had brought

slaves, elephant ivory, gold dust, ostrich feathers, and skins of wild beasts, while the one from Tripoli was principally laden with ironmongery, cutlery, brass and copper wire, cotton and silk goods, and various other articles of English, French, or German manufacture. The transactions were conducted very leisurely, nobody seeming to be in a hurry; it takes a great deal of talk to conduct business in an Arab market-place.

“Everybody who has anything to sell asks at least twice what he expects to receive, and every buyer begins by offering not more than half of what he expects to give. This custom leads to a great deal of haggling. The seller slowly reduces his demands, declaring each time that by the beard of the Prophet he has named the last figure which he will accept, and the buyer as slowly increases his offer, swearing in the same solemn way, and by the same solemn words, that it is the last offer he will make. Ned and I stood at a respectable distance from two merchants who were making a trade, and it took them a little more than an hour to come to an understanding. We thought it a very slow transaction, but Selim said the rapidity of it nearly took away his breath.

“There is an English consul residing at Gadames, and also a Turkish and a French one. These officers are stationed here principally to look after the trade of their respective countries, and to protect any of their merchants, or the agents of their merchants, who may be engaged in business there. The Turkish consul has a certain political authority, as Gadames pays a small annual tribute to Tripoli, which is a suzerainty of Turkey. The bonds

that unite Tripoli with the Turkish Empire are not very heavy, and consist principally in the payment of an annual tribute into the Sultan's treasury.

“We called upon the English consul,” continued Harry, “and were fortunate in finding him at home. We found him living quite comfortably in a house of native construction, partly in English, and partly in Arab style. His reception-room was more Arabic than English, as it had wide divans around the sides, but no chairs or sofas. There was a European table in the center of the room, which appeared somewhat incongruous when its surroundings were considered. His dining-room and its equipments were decidedly English, there being an extension table in the center, and some English-made chairs, all of which were brought on camel's backs from Tripoli, fourteen days' journey to the northward. The bedrooms of the consul and his family were likewise of English style, but any guests that he received slept on divans, and not upon beds. He invited us to dine with him on the following day, and meet his wife and daughter; he said our visit would be a great pleasure to them, as they had very few opportunities for seeing travelers, or of hearing their native language, except from each other.

“Imagine an Englishman in his own native island inviting three total strangers to dinner and introducing them to his family! His friends would consider him a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. But here in the desert foreigners are rare, and customs are not as rigid as on British soil.

“The consul took us to the governor's house, and we

made a short call on that functionary. He served pipes and coffee to us, asked about our journey, whence we had come, and whither we expected to go. In reply to the former question we told him briefly what the reader already knows; as to the latter, we replied that our next destination was Mourzouk, the capital of Fezzan. He shook his head on receiving this information, and said that the road to Mourzouk was not very safe, and he would advise us to start with a strong caravan which was to set out in a few days. He also advised us to lay aside our European dress and adopt the Arab one, which would render us less conspicuous while on the route. The consul, who acted as interpreter, seconded the advice of the governor, and said that we would do well to follow it.

“The governor offered to supply us with a house during our stay in the town, but we declined his offer with thanks, explaining that we preferred to remain with our people and keep them out of possible trouble. He commended our decision, and I have no doubt was heartily glad of it, as he was thereby relieved from any trouble concerning us. He did not invite us to stay to dinner, which was quite to our satisfaction, as we had dined so many times after the Arab fashion that all novelty in this line was gone. When a suitable pause in the dialogue came along we embraced it by rising and taking our leave.

“The governor returned our visit on the following morning, and, luckily for us, the consul arrived just as the visit began. The consul kindly acted as interpreter once more, and this saved us the necessity of calling upon Renaud, whose translations were not always as correct as

we could have wished them to be. We were careful not to be outdone in hospitality, and had pipes and coffee served very soon after the arrival of our guests, together with a bottle of sweet cordial, which evidently suited the taste of the governor, as he had his glass filled two or three times; he did not ask if the liquor contained alcohol in any form, and probably had in mind the old adage: 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.'"

After the governor had departed, Doctor Whitney, accompanied by the consul, went in search of the sheikh of the caravan which was about to leave for Mourzouk. With some difficulty they found him; when they went to his camp, they were told that he was in the great square, or market-place. In looking for him in that locality, they were told that he had just returned to his camp; they rode back again, about two miles from the city, and there found him. The consul had met him before and had been of service to him, and this paved the way for negotiations at once.

The sheikh expressed himself as not only willing, but desirous of having the strangers travel with him; he intimated that a certain amount of backsheesh would be necessary, and in case the caravan was attacked he should expect the strangers to do their share of fighting, not that he expected any, but it was well to have everything understood beforehand. The strangers would carry their own supply of water and provisions, have their own servants, and live in any way that pleased them. Their place in the caravan when on the march would be designated, and whenever camp was formed the

sheikh would select the spot where they would spread their tents.

Now came the delicate question of settling the amount of backsheesh, or present, in return for the protection of the caravan. The sheikh named twenty pounds, which the doctor thought quite reasonable, but the consul told him it was altogether too much.

“When he asks twenty pounds,” said the consul, “he will be perfectly satisfied with ten. I will tell him that you never heard of anybody paying more than ten, and he will drop to that figure at once.”

The consul informed the sheikh; and, as he had predicted, down came the amount to ten pounds, which the doctor consented to pay. The sheikh said that he would start five days later, and with this understanding the parties separated.

“We got along very well with that fellow,” said the consul, as they were returning to the doctor’s camp. “It is lucky that I had dealings with him before, or we would have been there three times as long. You’ve already learned what a slow process it is to negotiate with these people; if you want to buy a horse of an Arab, you must begin by telling him you want to sell a cow or a camel, and gradually work around to the real business. I’ve lived here quite a number of years, and know their ways, but I can’t get over feeling that the English and American method of coming to business at once is the best. But I wasn’t sent out here to change the customs of the country, and shall not try to do so.”

The doctor agreed with the consul, that he preferred the

short and quick way of transaction, and he also said that it was not their business to attempt to reform the methods of Africa and Asia, especially as the effort would be entirely hopeless. The consul remained to luncheon with the doctor and his young friends, and then returned to his home in the city, where, several hours later, he received the trio of Americans at dinner. The dinner was enjoyable in every way, and our friends came away from it with the feeling that they had been handsomely treated, and also that their visit had been a pleasant episode in the life of the consul's family.

During the rest of their stay in Gadames our friends were occupied with preparations for their journey to Mourzouk and beyond. Some of the camels that showed signs of weakness were exchanged for others in better condition, and three other camels were added to the caravan for purposes of transportation. Quantities of beads, brass and copper wire, sashes, handkerchiefs, cutlery, cotton, and other goods were bought for the purpose of paying the expenses of travel and making presents. The party expected to penetrate into regions where money was unknown, and therefore it was necessary to be equipped with the currency of the country. In journeying through Africa, the traveler realizes the great advantage of a universal circulating medium.

Beads and wire are the principal money, and it might all be well enough if they circulated universally; unhappily, however, they do nothing of the kind. The kinds that are acceptable in one district are quite uncurrent in another, and will not be taken at any price; consequently the

traveler must have all the different varieties of these articles, and pack them in bales by themselves, so that, whatever country or district he reaches, he may be able to lay his hand on the goods adapted to it.

Ned and Harry were too young to know from practical experience the condition of affairs in the United States previous to 1860, but Dr. Whitney vividly recalled the State bank currency of ante-bellum days, when the money of one State was uncurrent or at a discount in another. The conditions of African travel reminded him of old times in America.

Most of the purchases of goods were made by Renaud, assisted by an Arab who had been hired to accompany the expedition from Gadames, on account of his knowledge of the interior. The packing of the goods was performed by these two, assisted by Yusef and Abdallah. Ned said that he and Harry "bossed the job" occasionally, but he had a suspicion that they hindered the work quite as much as they helped it.

Their Tuareg friends remained in camp in the palm grove for two or three days, and then went out again to the desert. The people of Gadames pay a heavy tribute to Tuareg, Chaamba, and other hostile tribes on condition of not being disturbed, as the robber Arabs have the city at their mercy. Formerly they made occasional raids upon the place and cut off trade and travel, and the people of the city found that they could not live in peace unless they bought off their enemies. So the deal was made, and the residents of Gadames are very careful to meet their obligations on the day the payment is due; they

know that if they fail to keep their promises their enemies will give them a very sharp reminder by cutting off all trade, and also by making an attack upon the place.

The Tuareg chief whom the doctor had cured of his ailment offered to do anything in his power for the party, and volunteered to make the journey to Mourzouk, if our friends desired he should do so, but Mourzouk was out of the range of the Tuaregs, and for them to go there would require a heavy backsheesh, which, of course, the doctor would have to pay. Then the chief would expect something, and altogether the escort would be an expensive one. Our friends were content with the protection of the caravan, and declined with thanks the offer of their late traveling companion. The sheikh gave a letter of recommendation to any Tuaregs whom they might meet, and remarked that if it did no good it would certainly do no harm.

When the time came for the departure of the caravan the sheikh said he must wait another day, as a portion of his convoy was not ready; the one day extended to two, and then, again, to three. It might have run on for a week or more, but the sheikh could give no other reason for delay, and so, about the middle of the third day, the caravan moved out. It made its first camp only a few miles from Gadames, and when all were assembled the sight was an imposing one.

There were fully five hundred camels, and more than that number of men; every man carried some kind of a weapon, and, taken collectively, the variety would have been sufficient for stocking a museum. There were anti-

quated match-locks and flint-locks, along with muzzle-loading and breech-loading shotguns and rifles; but it is proper to say that the breech-loading firearms were only in the hands of our friends. Their Winchester rifles were objects of the greatest curiosity, and the Arabs looked with wonder on a gun that could fire sixteen times without the necessity of reloading.

Ned observed that the camels carried bags of charcoal in addition to their ordinary burdens. He called Renaud's attention to the contents of the bags, and said he supposed they were carrying it as fuel.

"Yes," replied Renaud, "fuel for camels, not for men."

"What do you mean?" queried Ned; "I don't understand you."

"Why," answered Renaud, "don't you know that camels are sometimes fed on charcoal?"

"No, I didn't know that," was the reply. "We haven't fed ours on that article."

"The reason we didn't," responded the Frenchman, "was because barley and dates were cheaper than charcoal at the points where we took our departure into the desert. In the western part of the Sahara, and along the southern portion, caravans frequently take charcoal for feeding their camels. It is light in proportion to its bulk, and while the animals would prefer grass and shrubs, they get along very well on charcoal when grass and shrubs are not to be found. The camel is a curious kind of beast, anyway; he is admirably adapted to his work, and if it were not for him we could not traverse these deserts.

I don't believe there is another animal in the world that would live on the food on which a camel thrives ; even the ox, one of the most patient and hardy of beasts, could not live a week if compelled to adopt the diet of a camel."

The conversation was interrupted by the sheikh of the caravan, who happened along at this time.

The next morning the caravan started out in very creditable season. The sheikh led, and the others followed in the order already prescribed by the leader. As mentioned heretofore, the caravan consisted of groups of merchants, each of whom owned or controlled several camels with their burdens and attendants. Each merchant endeavors to keep his camels together, both by day and by night, and one of the principal duties of the driver is to keep the animals from straying apart while on the march. These merchants find it to their advantage, especially on the score of safety, to join their forces and place themselves under the care of a shiekh of the country having a certain force of armed followers. The merchants and attendants are armed, and each is expected to do his share of fighting in case of necessity.

Some of the caravans that traverse the desert are very large, comprising two thousand or three thousand camels, and nearly as many men. Probably the greatest of all the caravans is the one that sets out from Tendoof in southwestern Morocco for Timbuctoo in October, and returning in the spring, and consists of fifteen thousand or twenty thousand camels. About one third of these camels are loaded with English and German goods ; the others carrying no burdens till they reach Tandeng in the great

Western Desert, where they take cargoes of salt, which is sold at an enormous profit at Timbuctoo.

The most celebrated caravans are those formed by pilgrims going to Mecca, particularly those who assemble at Cairo and Damascus. The latter consists of thirty or forty thousand pilgrims, and is under the special protection of the sultan of Turkey. The caravan by which the Persian pilgrims travel to Mecca starts from Bagdad, and is the vehicle of a very important trade. There used to be caravans from India to Mecca, but they were given up thirty or forty years ago, as the pilgrims found it easier and far cheaper to go by steamer to Jeddah, on the Red Sea, from which Mecca is only one hundred miles distant. For the same reasons, there are now no caravans from Constantinople to Mecca, and those from Cairo and Damascus have greatly diminished in importance.

The caravan in which our friends traveled halted at a little past noon in a small oasis where there was a well of very brackish water; too much so for the taste of our friends, but not for the Arabs. They drank of it quite freely, but Ned said he did not see anybody come back for a second drink. There was some delay in starting after the halt, owing to quarrels among the camel drivers, quarrels that grew so boisterous as to lead to blows and require the interference of the sheikh. The sheikh of a caravan has an autocratic power like that of the captain of a ship at sea. In any dispute he acts as judge and jury, and dispenses justice with a free hand. In this case he told the disputants that they might go free, as it was

their first offence, but any further quarrel would be punished with the stick.

In the evening two of those who had quarreled at noon got into a row again and came to blows. Thereupon the sheikh ordered that each of them should receive twenty blows with the stick. Some of his immediate followers seized the combatants, threw them on the ground, and sat on their heads and feet, while others administered the prescribed number of blows. It is safe to say that they did not strike lightly; an Arab greatly enjoys the opportunity to thrash a fellow Arab, and it is said that if one of them is ordered to punish his twin brother he bears as heavily on the stick as he would if the victim was a total stranger.

The road, generally, was not unlike that from Temacin to Gadames, though the country was more uneven than that which our friends had recently traveled, the hills being higher and more rocky, while the valleys were deeper and often with precipitous sides. There were occasional fertile spots in the valleys where the horses and camels obtained a little grass, but the opportunities for feeding were not numerous, and the animals, like the men, were obliged to rely upon the provisions they carried. Ned observed that the supplies of charcoal were drawn upon from time to time, but the prevalence of shrubs, camel-thorns, and other growing things enabled the camels to browse for a considerable part of the way. Dates, barley, and millet made into kouskous formed the principal food of the merchants and their attendants. They were not an inconsiderable part of our friends' sup-

plies, who now and then added a can of preserved meats or vegetables brought from England or America. Both the youths said it brought them nearer home to eat Baltimore oysters, canned chicken or turkey, preserved peaches, pears, and other fruits, bearing American labels.

The doctor remarked that travel has been robbed of some of its terrors by the invention of canned goods and the facility with which they are scattered all over the globe.

One day Renaud dismounted from his mule and began searching in the earth near by; very quickly he brought out a truffle, which he held between his fingers, and called the doctor's attention to his discovery. The doctor recognized the article at once, and asked if there were more of them.

"Oh! plenty," was the reply. "Plenty; they grow in this part of the desert, and in other parts, too. If you like, I will get you enough for dinner."

"Certainly," said the doctor. "We would like some very much; they will piece out our soup admirably."

Renaud called Yusef to hold his mule for him while he indulged in a truffle hunt. In a half an hour or so he had a good hatful, and, as the doctor predicted, they formed a fine adjunct to the dinner.

Ned made note of this circumstance, and in writing up his account afterwards, he said from that time on they had truffles quite often. The Arabs make little use of them, although they are mentioned by the greatest of Mohammedan travelers, Ibn Batutu, in the middle of the fourteenth century. When preparing dinner Renaud made a soup

of the truffles, and everybody pronounced it the most delicious soup he had yet eaten in the desert.

On the day following the one when the truffles were discovered, our friends met a caravan of about fifty travelers on their way from Mourzouk to Gadames. The caravan was principally laden with ivory, though they had several bales of ostrich feathers, and probably a quantity of gold dust, though the people of the party did not admit having anything of the kind. Travelers in the desert are as cautious about admitting the possession of gold as are any other travelers, and for the same reason; they do not wish to run the risk of inviting robbery. Ivory and ostrich feathers are less tempting in their way, but by no means spurned by Tuareg, Chaamba, or other marauders.

Almost from the time they started from Gadames a flock of swallows had followed the caravan, most of the birds disappearing in the daytime, but invariably coming up to the camp at night. When the camp was formed the swallows spread around, finding places inside the tents and in the nooks and holes in the baggage, as it was piled on the ground.

One night there was a heavy wind which blew down nearly every tent in the camp; the men were half buried in the sand which was borne on the breeze, and as for the swallows, they flew blindly about, except such as had found secure places in the baggage. In the morning the number of swallows was found to be reduced greatly, and Ned and Harry surmised that they had been blown away by the wind. The youths speculated during the day as

to whether their little friends would return or not. Ned thought that they had been carried away by the gale and would not be able to find their way back, but Harry believed otherwise, and felt confident that they would be able to welcome the whole flock when they again went into camp. Unhappily, and to the regret of both, Ned was right; the missing swallows did not return.

For three or four days the route lay over a region called the Hammada, a dreary plateau, where the ground was hard and covered with stones and occasional patches of loose sand. There were numerous hollows in the Hammada, but none that contained wells of potable water. The country was elevated, observation by means of a thermometer and boiling water showing it to vary from 1,000 to 1,500 feet above sea level. In this region the camel drivers killed a considerable number of venomous lizards, some of them being determined that not one of the creatures they saw should escape alive. They said that the bite of the lizard was always dangerous and often fatal.

Snakes of a venomous sort also abounded, together with scorpions, but the snakes and scorpions were less numerous than were the repulsive and dangerous lizards. Several jackals were seen, and Ned remarked that he could not understand how any jackal who respected himself would live in such a locality.

After the southern extremity of the Hammada was passed the caravan descended to a plain nearly seven hundred feet below the level of the great plateau. On reaching the plain, the course of the caravan lay in the direction of

a spot in the Sahara called El Hasi, which means "The Well." Harry remarked that no name could be more appropriate, as there is a well in a certain spot and nothing else for miles around. There was a building there once, measuring one hundred feet one way by fifty feet the other, the well being in its center; but this building has fallen into ruins. The well is in the midst of a sand waste; it is about thirty feet deep, and has a never-failing supply of good water, not as good, Ned remarked, as Croton or Cochituate water, but good from a desert point of view.

"We remained a day at El Hasi," said Ned, "as it takes a good deal of time to water five hundred camels and as many men. There are a few stone troughs from which the horses and camels can drink, and these are filled by means of buckets made from elephant hide brought from the regions far to the south where elephants abound. No matter how fast we drew the water, it always bubbled up and remained at the same level. We found that the temperature of the water was $71\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ Fahrenheit, and Selim told us that it remained the same throughout the year."

CHAPTER XI.

EL HASI TO MOURZOUK. — KINGDOM OF FEZZAN.

FROM El Hasi to Mourzouk there are three roads, according to the account of our friends, and a lively dispute arose between the camel drivers and merchants as to which road the caravan should take. Each road had its advocates, and each its detractors, for the denunciations of the different routes were quite as numerous as the praises thereof. Harry remarked that the discussion reminded him of an American story about a traveler who arrived at a point where there were two roads leading to a certain town. He hailed a boy whom he met there, and asked him which of the two roads was the shorter.

“ Pretty much the same, I reckon,” replied the boy.

“ Well, then,” said the traveler, “ which is the best?”

“ Don’t know,” was the reply; “ both o’ them pretty bad. Take which of ’em you like, and before you get half way you’ll wish you had taken t’other.”

The sheikh of the caravan settled the dispute very quickly as they left El Hasi, for he led the way along the middle road. It proved to be dreary and dismal, and decidedly bad in many places, but it had the merit of being shorter than either of its competitors.

“ Rather unexpectedly,” said Ned in his journal, “ we came at one point upon some ancient ruins. We had

already seen some pillars and the ruins of extensive buildings, and had been told that they were the work of the Romans, but everything we had seen thus far was in such a very bad state that we couldn't make much out of it. But in the spot I refer to we found a monument very well preserved, which Dr. Whitney says was built about the second century of our era. There was also part of a wall of what was once a large building, with a well-preserved arch that was undoubtedly of Roman construction. Harry made a sketch of the arch, while I made one of the monument.

"This discovery," continued Ned, "together with the Roman remains that we had already seen, led to a discussion concerning the occupancy of this country by the Romans. You will remember our mention of the Roman bridge, El Kautara, at the entrance to the Sahara, between Constantine and Biskra, and our remark that at one time the region bordering the Mediterranean, and now called Algeria, was occupied by the Romans.

"As near as we can make out, the Roman occupation extended all along the entire southern coast of the Mediterranean, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the boundaries of Egypt. The Roman territory in some places extended three hundred or four hundred miles south of the Mediterranean. Where we now are was probably the limit of Roman occupation, as no traces of Roman monuments or constructions of any kind are found south of this locality. Why the Romans should have pushed so far as this we can't understand, unless the country at that time was much more productive and much more fertile than we

find it to-day. The probabilities are that it has greatly changed in two thousand years, and where we find great wastes of barren lands there were formerly productive fields and wide forests of palm trees.

“On the second day of our journey we came to a queer sort of a place, called Ederi. It stands in a plain, or, rather, a wide valley between two hills, the valley containing a palm oasis of no great extent and some gardens. The town is built on the sides of a conical hill, which rises on a steady slope of about forty-five degrees from the base to the summit; consequently the houses stand one above the other like the steps of a terrace, reminding us of Algiers when viewed from the bay. It was formerly a place of some importance, and our sheikh told us that the inhabitants were obliged to pay a heavy tribute to the marauding Arabs.

“Some thirty or forty years ago, they neglected to pay, or haggled about the payments, I don’t know which, and the result was that one night the Arabs raided the place, drove out most of the inhabitants, and carried away the able-bodied young men, and sold them as slaves. From that time only about twenty of the houses in the town have been occupied, and there have been times since the raid when there was not an inhabitant in the place.

“We climbed to the highest point of the steep hill, which gave us an extended view, although a disappointing one, as the scene in every direction was one of desolation, or very nearly so. It is a great pity that some method cannot be devised for suppressing these marauding Arabs. There are many places in northern Africa which could

be greatly enlarged and would support a considerable population, if the people could live in peace, secure from the raids that are constantly threatening them. The valley around the Ederi could be made very productive, as water is readily obtained in all directions by digging only a few feet beneath the surface.

“We had progressed so far on our journey without encountering any hostilities that we began to expect very confidently that we would reach Mourzouk without trouble. We were forgetting the possibilities of a raid upon us when one morning, just at daybreak, the robbers appeared. Our camel drivers were just beginning to place their loads, when suddenly, from a ridge close to our encampment, a band of some thirty or forty armed Arabs, all mounted on horses, made their appearance. They rushed straight for the tents which were not yet struck, their plan evidently being to throw us into confusion, scatter the camels by frightening them, and drive them from the loads they were waiting to receive.

“Under ordinary circumstances the scheme might have worked very well, but on this occasion it was not successful. It happened that the sheikh's escort had assembled, and were nearly ready to start. They were armed with flint-lock guns, and their weapons were quite equal, if not superior, to those of their assailants. With great presence of mind, the sheikh ordered the escort to fire upon the advancing robbers; the order was obeyed, and several saddles were emptied of their occupants. This disconcerted the robbers, who checked their advance at once and turned their attention to their dead and

wounded. As soon as possible a second volley was given, and then the marauders fled from the valley.

“We three were at quite a distance from the sheikh’s headquarters and knew nothing of the attack until the firing began; by the time we reached the scene the contest was all over. The sheikh expressed his regret that we had not been there at the time with our Winchester rifles. We were rather non-committal on this subject, the fact being that we did not wish to indulge in any fighting unless compelled to do so. We told the sheikh that he had managed admirably without us, and we hoped that there would be no more trouble on our way to Mourzouk. He replied that he thought the robbers had received a lesson which they would remember for awhile, especially as he had ascertained that the sheikh of the band was one of those killed in the morning’s encounter. Not a man on our side had so much as received a scratch.

“For the rest of our journey to Mourzouk we kept a careful watch every night, surrounding our camp with a line of pickets fully two hundred yards away, and stationed at points which gave a wide survey of the surrounding country. I am confident that no appreciable body of men could have approached within a mile or so without discovery; except by dismounting and using the greatest caution.

“As we approached Mourzouk, the oases and plantations became more numerous and the population more dense. The country was very far from appearing to be a fertile one, but, judging by the Arabic standards, it was decidedly so; there is a great valley which is dotted with

green fields, some of them extending close up to the sand-hills on either side, and we could see in some places the grass apparently struggling for existence with the sand which had drifted over it. The water rises quite near the surface of the valley, and attached to every field is a well whence the water for irrigation purposes is taken.

“The work of drawing water for the fields is performed by donkeys under the direction of slaves. The slaves that we saw were mostly young and healthy looking, but their clothing was very limited in quantity; nearly all of them wore nothing but a cloth about the waist and a straw hat. A goodly number of them had only one of these articles instead of both, and where they were obliged to choose between them, they seemed to prefer the straw hat to the loin-cloth. The country is so warm that very little clothing is needed; the nights are cold at times, and when this is the case the people cover themselves with straw or mats, or huddle in the warmest corner they can find.

“The oasis of Mourzouk is an extensive one, although its vegetation is less dense than that of Tuggurt or Temacin. We encamped about a mile from the walls of the city, not far from a camp of pilgrims who were returning from Egypt to Morocco and Touat. Some of these pilgrims came over to see us as we were going into camp, but they did not remain long, as they did not find any acquaintances, and our people were too busy to pay them any attention. The doctor, Harry, and I were just getting ready to ride into the town when the English consular agent, who had been notified of our arrival through our

letter sent forward by a courier in the morning, came out to see us. After a pleasant chat with him we placed ourselves under his guidance, and proceeded within the walls of Mourzouk."

Our friends found Mourzouk rather picturesquely situated in palm groves and gardens, and exulted in the belief that they would find an abundance of garden vegetables that would be very welcome after their deprivations in the desert. They were doomed to disappointment, as they learned, on inquiry, that such things were very scarce and dear, particularly onions, that are nearly always sought by travelers whose bill of fare has been for some time a limited one. Ned and Harry wondered at the scanty supplies of fresh food, and came to the conclusion that it was caused by the indolence of the people, as the ground would produce abundantly if it were properly planted and cultivated. Milk was also very difficult to obtain, the scanty supply of this article coming entirely from goats. Wheat, barley, beans, and a few other things are grown in the fields, and some fruits, such as pomegranates, figs, and peaches, can be obtained in their season.

Ned made the following note concerning Mourzouk:—

"This city is the capital of Fezzan, a negro kingdom or sultanate of Northern Africa, and is situated in latitude $25^{\circ} 54'$ north, and longitude $14^{\circ} 12'$ east. It is built of brick cemented together and plastered over with clay; it is laid out with considerable regularity, and has, as nearly as we could ascertain, a population of between three and four thousand. According to tradition, it was much more important five hundred or a thousand years ago than it is

now. Formerly, it had a considerable trade and the majority of its inhabitants were engaged in mercantile business in one way or another. It has some trade now, but not nearly so much as in former times. The consul informs us that the annual business of the city is about one hundred thousand dollars nowadays, but it used to be five or ten times that amount.

“The trade currency they use here consists principally of the Austrian coins known as Maria Theresa dollars, which are dated about the middle of the last century. I was surprised at their abundance, and also at the fact that coins as old as these should appear so bright and fresh as most of them do. I mentioned this circumstance to the consul, whereupon he laughed, and said:—

“‘You are not aware, I presume, that these coins are made in Birmingham as an article of trade. They are manufactured there and sent out to Africa just like other goods, and are not treated as money until they get here.’

“That surprised me still more, and I did not endeavor to conceal my astonishment. I remarked that I would have supposed that the English laws against counterfeiting would prevent the making of these coins.

“‘If the coins were made for general circulation,’ replied the consul, ‘or an attempt was made to circulate them in Austria, there is little doubt that the Austrian government would call upon England to put a stop to their manufacture. They are never sent into the Austrian dominions, but are used here, as I before stated, just like any other trade goods; they are of the standard weight and fineness, and are as honest dollars as any of the original

Maria Theresa coins. Their ultimate fate is to be melted up and made into African ornaments, and this keeps up the trade in them.'

"This gave me a new light on matters of trade, and I may have more to say on the same subject later on.

"Harry and I rode entirely around Mourzouk outside the walls, and we guessed that the whole distance around was not more than two miles. The walls are not in very good repair, and a battery of modern artillery would make short work of them. There are gates on two sides,—the east and west. They have a small gate on the north side, but there is none whatever on the side that looks towards the south. An observing traveler would not need to be told that Mourzouk once contained a much larger population than it has to-day, as the houses in which people live are very scantily inhabited; a considerable number of dwellings is unoccupied, and not a few are absolutely crumbling into ruins. There is a wide road extending out for miles from the eastern gate which renders that part of the town more airy, and also at times more heated. Mourzouk is a hot place; the thermometer sometimes stands at one hundred and ten degrees in the shade, while one hundred and one hundred and five degrees are by no means uncommon.

"Harry observed in regard to the heat when I mentioned it that he did not think Mourzouk would be a good place to start a clothing store. Our observation among the natives showed us that clothing was not specially popular. The well-to-do people wrap themselves in white bournouses and other garments, but the lower class of inhabitants are

content with a loin cloth and a hat. Boys and girls up to ten or twelve years of age wear very little else than 'a pleasing smile,' to borrow the words of a traveler among the Pacific Islands. Heavy blankets and quilts are by no means necessary at night, and I imagine that there would be very little market for them if they were brought here for sale.

"Speaking about market reminds me that we visited the bazaar which is in the center of the city about midway between the east and west gates, and is the most frequented part of the place. It has a roomy appearance and is covered with a roof, the latter supported by the stems of palm trees; the roof produces that subdued light which is cherished by the sellers of most kinds of goods if not by the buyers. Near the eastern end of the bazaar there is what may be called a police station where the officials who keep order in the town and guard the bazaar are stationed.

"At the other end of the bazaar and a little away from it is the kasbah, or citadel, where the sultan resides, and it maintains a garrison of four or five hundred soldiers to preserve the peace and dignity of the State. The soldiers appear to be well fed, but they are a ragged lot of fellows armed with flint-lock muskets of the old Brown Bess pattern, which seem to be scattered all over the world. I asked about the soldiers, and was told that they were obtained by conscription among the poorer classes of people in the different oases of Fezzan. The kasbah is said to be able to lodge two thousand men; whether it can do so or not, we are unable to say positively, as we have not been allowed to enter it. The sultan is at home at

this time, and when he is within the walls of the kasbah no stranger is permitted to inspect it. We learned that it is a large quadrangular building with a large interior courtyard; the principal apartments being arranged around this courtyard. The reception and other halls are of goodly size, but the most of the apartments are smaller than one would expect to find in such an extensive building as the kasbah of Mourzouk.

“Very few of the merchants of Mourzouk are natives of the place; they come here with their goods, remain long enough to sell them, and then go away. They sell their merchandise for cash and consequently money is always in demand. Sometimes there is an immense scarcity of cash, and this is what makes the demand for the Austrian dollars that we mentioned. The most popular route of commerce is the one to the west, where the Tuaregs are always ready to supply whatever camels may be needed for the transportation of merchandise, and to guarantee their safety, which is not the case on the other routes.”

When Ned had completed his story of Mourzouk Harry suggested that, as the place was the capital of Fezzan, a little account of the kingdom would be in order.

“You’re quite right,” said Ned. “Suppose you write it.”

“I’ve already begun it,” said Harry. “As soon as it is finished I’ll read it to you.”

Ned agreed to be ready to listen as soon as Harry was ready to read. The next day Harry brought out his paper and read as follows:—

“Fezzan is about four hundred and sixty miles long by three hundred wide. It is bounded by the Sahara desert on three sides, east, south, and west, and on the north by Tripoli. There are three ranges of barren mountains in the northern part, but none of them exceed two thousand feet in height. In the southern part there are wide sand wastes exactly similar to the neighboring Sahara Desert; these wastes, or deserts, are broken here and there by ranges of low hills with valleys between them. These valleys include all the land in the country worth cultivating; dates are the principal products of the country and the chief food of the inhabitants, and they also raise figs and some other fruits. There are no rivers or brooks, and not many natural springs of pure, fresh water.

“They do not raise many domestic animals in Fezzan; of course they have chickens, the negroes of Africa being no less fond of barnyard fowl than are their kindred in America; goats are their principal quadrupeds, and they also have donkeys and sheep, and, in some districts, horned cattle. They have more wild animals than tame ones, and these include lions, hyenas, panthers, jackals, gazelles, foxes, and tiger cats.”

“There!” said Harry, as he paused. “How is that for an account of this country?”

“Not a very full one,” said Ned, with a slight laugh. “You said nothing about the population, trade, or government.”

“I was coming to that,” said Harry. “I have it on a separate sheet of paper.”

Then the youth continued as follows:—

“Fezzan has a considerable trade with Timbuctoo and Bornu, and caravans come to it from Cairo, Tripoli, Gadames, Touat, and the Soudan. The population can only be guessed, as no census has ever been taken; the best judges say it is about one hundred thousand; just about enough to make a good-sized ward in New York or Boston. The country is governed by a sultan, who pays an annual tribute to Tripoli, and maintains an army in time of peace of about one thousand men. In time of war he could bring ten or twelve thousand men into the field, provided they did not run away, as they frequently do in order to escape the conscription.”

“That will do very well,” said Ned, with a patronizing air. “We’ll learn more about the country as we go along. It seems to me, though, that the ruler of such an insignificant country hardly deserves such a high-sounding title as that of ‘sultan.’”

“Well, he’s a sultan, for all that,” replied Harry, “although not a large one. And that reminds me of a story that was told by the United States minister to France, a good many years ago, about an American, who persuaded the minister to get him a ticket to one of the State balls at the palace of the Tuileries. On the evening of the ball the minister noticed that his American friend was constantly hovering about a group of the old marshals of France. Not admiring the conduct of his countryman, he beckoned the latter aside, and asked why he kept so continually in the vicinity of those great men.

“‘Well, I’m as good as any of them fellows,’ replied the American; ‘I’m a marshal, myself,’ and with that

he took from his pocket a commission he had received as one of the marshals to collect the census returns in an interior district of Kentucky. If any comparison between the sultan of Fezzan and any other great sultan should be made, the ruler of Fezzan might reply:—

“‘I’m as good as any of them fellows; I’m a sultan, myself.’”

Our friends remained several days at Mourzouk; they stayed in their camp for a day or two, and the rest of the time in the town, where they were lodged with the British consul, who had a large house with ample accommodations for a dozen visitors. Renaud had charge of the camp, and came daily to receive orders from Doctor Whitney, and to make whatever purchases he deemed wise, or his employer suggested. The horses were in charge of their grooms, who took them to camp every night and brought them to town at a fixed hour every morning, so as to have them ready when wanted by their owners.

It was necessary for our friends to make a considerable number of purchases previous to the continuance of their journey to the south, and these purchases were managed by the doctor and Renaud, who were materially assisted by the consul. The latter was not altogether disinterested in his services, as he was himself in business, and made no concealment whatever of the fact. Doubtless he made a good profit on his transactions, but Doctor Whitney and his young companions had not the least objection to his doing so, and felt entirely confident that they had received the equivalent of his profits in the services he rendered them, with his hospitality, and in preventing extortion by the

native merchants. Their purchases in Mourzouk, added to what they had bought in Gadames, gave them a good equipment for their journey.

The consul advised them to secure some additional camels, as the prices of these animals in Mourzouk were low, the place being in the center of a region where great numbers of camels are raised. Camels of the best quality, he said, could be bought for forty dollars, and good-working ones for twenty-five or thirty dollars apiece. As this was far below the prices the travelers had paid elsewhere, they acted upon the proposition by purchasing five or six of the ordinary kind, and two of the best sort; the latter replacing two of the camels originally bought for personal use. These two were taken by the doctor and Ned; Harry's original camel turned out an excellent beast and needed no replacing.

The tribe of desert Arabs called the Tinylkum is largely engaged in rearing camels, and its villages are scattered about the eastern part of the sultanate of Fezzan. Their camels constitute their chief wealth, and they are largely engaged in the caravan trade. On the route to the Soudan they take contracts for carrying merchandise, stipulating that for a certain price per hundredweight it shall be delivered at a designated point, and they also hire out their camels or sell them, as may be desired by those with whom they deal. They are averse, however, to hiring out their camels unless they go along themselves to see that the animals are not over-laden, as a hired camel in Africa is very apt to be regarded by the man who hires it very much as a hired horse is in America. The indi-

vidual who is managing a camel in which he is not personally interested is very apt to pile upon the creature's back his full cargo of merchandise, and then mount himself on the top. As can readily be understood, the Arab owner will earnestly protest against such practices.

A caravan was setting out for the south, and Dr. Whitney decided that he would arrange to accompany it. The British consul brought about a meeting between the doctor and the sheikh of the caravan, and the matter was speedily adjusted on about the same terms as that for the journey from Gadames to Mourzouk. The doctor paid sixty dollars for the protection afforded by the Tinylkum sheikh, and it was understood that the party were to supply all of their own provisions and the fodder for their animals, and they were to do their share of fighting when it became necessary.

On the appointed day the combined caravan took up its line of march, and the faces of the travelers were turned toward the south. Both the youths wondered with considerable anxiety when they would reach the regions of the Niger and be in the real tropical forests of Africa.

CHAPTER XII.

A SLAVE CARAVAN — LAKE CHAD.

THE road on which our friends were now traveling is not usually regarded as a safe one, but the degrees of safety and danger vary from time to time. It is generally infested by marauding bands of Arabs, one tribe having possession of a portion of the road, while another tribe controls a different part. Occasionally these marauders get to quarreling among themselves, and whenever they do so one band generally succeeds in driving away another, and in so doing is itself pretty badly crippled. At such times the route is safest for honest travelers.

There had been an affair of this sort not long before, and the Tynilkum sheikh of the caravan which our friends accompanied felt quite confident that there would be no trouble, as his party was well armed, and could give a good account of itself in case of attack. But on the third morning out from Mourzouk a report was brought by some natives of the country that a hostile band was occupying the road a few miles ahead and waiting to attack any caravan that came along. Thereupon the sheikh gave orders that all the weapons should be carefully inspected and preparation made for active work in case they encountered the enemy.

The caravan started from its halting place at the usual

time, and proceeded quietly enough for three or four hours ; suddenly one of the men in the advance came running to the rear, swinging his gun about his head, and calling out in loud tones :

“ The enemy has come ! The enemy has come ! ”

This brought the whole caravan to a halt ; everybody who was mounted on a camel came to the ground immediately, and every man seized his weapon, whatever it might be. There was great commotion, and the horses, camels, and donkeys seemed to partake of the excitement. So great was the confusion that it was some time before our friends could ascertain the cause of the alarm. When the facts were discovered they proved to be as follows : —

The man who gave the alarm was, as before stated, in the front of the procession ; he saw three Arabs mounted on camels some distance ahead, and while he watched them they were joined by several other men, also on camels. After halting for a few minutes, as if to hold a consultation, they turned in the direction of the caravan ; thereupon he ran to the rear, announcing as he did that the enemy had come.

The supposed enemy came and proved to be a friendly party of natives. It took at least an hour to get things in order so that the caravan could move on again.

Caravans of various sizes were met from time to time, and the most of them reported that everything was quiet along the road. In the afternoon of the day on which the alarm occurred a caravan of about fifty camels and a hundred slaves was met in a spot where the road led between two low ridges of rocks. Both caravans halted for a short

time, and the sheikhs exchanged information; Ned and Harry embraced the opportunity to look at the troop of slaves, which had been captured about two hundred miles away to the south. They had expected to see the slaves chained together, or carrying heavy yokes of wood, which is usually the case with slave gangs in Central Africa, as described by Dr. Livingstone. Consequently the youths were somewhat surprised when they found the slaves unfettered and without any burdens. However, they learned on inquiry that the slaves were kept under a close guard, and, until a few days before, had been firmly bound together to prevent their escaping. They were now so far from their own country that, even if they succeeded in getting away from the caravan, there would be little chance for them to regain their homes, as they could not travel without provisions and water, and would be sure to encounter hostility at every step. Ned remarked that it was a case of frying-pan and fire, as they would get out of the clutches of one master only to fall into those of another.

Our friends afterward learned that this very caravan which we just mentioned was attacked two days later by a band of marauders. Every one of the masters was murdered, and the camels and slaves were carried away.

The next day, when the caravan went into camp, a party of natives from a neighboring village came among them. They were armed with bows and arrows, and seemed to be acquainted with some of the camel drivers of the caravan. After a little conversation, four of them proceeded to execute what appeared to be a war dance, accompanied by four of the men of the caravan. The others gathered

in a circle about the dancers, and squatted on the ground, and as Dr. Whitney and the youths advanced to witness the dance, way was made for them until they formed a part of the circle. The sheikh of the caravan also came and looked on, and consequently everything seemed friendly enough.

The strangers in their dance circled about in the space enclosed by the spectators until they came quite close to where the three Americans were standing. At a given signal three of them seized the wrists of our friends, while the fourth caught hold of the hands of the sheikh, and demanded tribute. This action seemed very much like an attack, and Dr. Whitney's impulse was to draw his revolver and defend himself, but he refrained from so doing, watching the sheikh to see what steps he would take.

The sheikh responded to the request for tribute by giving the equivalent of ten or fifteen cents, and our three friends followed his example. Ned inquired the reason of this singular performance, and obtained the following answer : —

“ A long time ago the Kiloui, a tribe of Arabs from the Sahara, took possession of this district. After they had conquered it, they entered into an agreement with the negro natives that they should not be disturbed, and in token of their agreement the chief of the Kiloui should marry a black woman, thus symbolizing the union of the two tribes. The covenant or agreement was made at the very place where the dance came off, or within a few hundred yards of it. Ever since then whenever a caravan passes the negroes have a dance, and during the dance

they have the right to demand tribute from their masters. Every man not a negro is admitted to be a master of the blacks, and, therefore, is liable to be called upon as our party was."

Another dance was executed after the tribute had been given, and then, as night was coming on, the natives disappeared, returning, no doubt, to their village. But before departing, they went around among the people of the caravan, collecting something from each one. Most of the caravan party gave their tribute in dates, and when the dancers left, each one of them had a sackful of this fruit, some of their burdens being so heavy that the bearers fairly staggered under them.

We will listen to Ned as he tells us of some of the incidents of their experience.

"The day after the dance," said Ned, "one of our companions called attention to a plant which the Arabs call siwak, and whose botanical name is *Capparis sodata*. We had seen the bush before, but did not know of its value. It looks not unlike a currant bush, and its fruit bears a close resemblance to the currant. It is eaten fresh, and also dried and kept for future use. Its root is used for cleansing the teeth, and wherever this bush abounds and there is a scarcity of salt, they make an excellent substitute for that commodity by burning the root and using the ashes instead of salt.

"The camels seem to be fond of eating the fresh leaves of the siwak if they have any other plant to mix with it, but they soon get tired of it if they have nothing else to eat. I have repeatedly seen our camels grazing where

this bush abounded, alternating mouthfuls from it and from other plants, very much as an individual at table alternates between bread, meat, and vegetables. I am told that the bush does not grow farther north than the twentieth parallel of latitude. It is very abundant in the valley of the Niger and in the desert region that borders upon it.

“We had a disagreeable experience at a boundary line between two districts which were hostile to one another. We had paid tribute in one district to allow us to pass through it in safety, and on reaching the borders of the other, we tried to negotiate for a safe-conduct through the territory, but the people whose land we had been crossing said that we must not pay anything to their enemies, and if we did so they would fall upon our caravan and destroy it before we could cross the line.

“They demanded a tribute for themselves on the ground that the two peoples were at war, and naturally they were the owners of any property of their enemy’s which was found inside their own lines. Our sheikh dared not cross the line until he had permission to do so; otherwise he would be inviting an attack. Between the two of them things looked squally, and we got everything in readiness for a battle against whichever party should attack us.

“Our sheikh managed to send a messenger across the line to negotiate for a safe-conduct. When he came back with everything arranged we made a sudden start at midnight and got over the boundary before our recent entertainers discovered that we had gone. They sent word to our sheikh that whenever he passed that way again he would be compelled to pay a double *hongo*, or tribute, to

make up for his failure to meet their demands at the present time. The sheikh took the suggestion quite philosophically, and said that when he came around again the war would probably be over, and, no matter which side won, he could make much better terms than he could with the two of them when they were hostile to each other.

“Our party,” continued Ned, “was unwillingly the cause of some of the trouble undergone by the sheikh in making terms for passing through the districts controlled by the different tribes. We had in our baggage several cases of sheet iron filled with dried biscuit, from which we occasionally drew whenever we wanted a slight change of diet. The rumor went around the camp, all unknown to us, that the cases contained money,—real gold money,—and, of course, the value they enclosed was something enormous. From the camp the rumor reached the parties with whom we were dealing; it made the demands upon the caravan larger than they would have been otherwise, and thus increased the danger of our being attacked. Renaud was the first of our party to learn the report; he positively denied that there was any truth in it, but the Arabs refused to believe him, and so he came to Dr. Whitney and told him what had happened.

“‘I think I can soon settle that difficulty,’ said the doctor. ‘Start the report that we are about to open one of our iron chests, and get together as many people as you can to witness the operation.’

“Renaud went away, and before long we observed quite a crowd gathering around our part of the camp; evidently they wanted to witness the opening of the

treasure chest. The boxes were placed on the ground, and then the doctor, through the aid of Renaud as interpreter, requested the chief of the camel drivers to select one of them.

“He lifted each box in turn, and finally selected what he considered to be the heaviest. In a very few minutes the cover of the chest was removed, and the receptacle turned bottom upwards. Instead of the gold that all expected to see, there dropped from the box only some dried and rather tasteless biscuits, which were passed around as presents to the assemblage, and were not very gratefully received. This ended the rumor of our untold wealth, and for the rest of the time we had little trouble in adjusting the price of the tribute.

“In almost every place where we camped,” continued Ned, “we were more or less disturbed by the ants, of which there were several kinds. They are a great annoyance to travelers in Central Africa, as they overrun everything, and are very destructive of leather and woolen goods. Another, and nearly as great an annoyance, is the article called *karengia* by the natives,—the seed of a plant which grows everywhere in this region, and especially in the valleys which are the customary camping places. The *karengia* is a little seed covered with a burr, and this burr attaches itself to every part of one’s clothing when the plant is touched. Not only does it cling to the clothing, but it attaches itself to the skin. It is necessary for everybody to carry a pair of pincers, so as to draw from the hands the tiny spires of these burrs, as they cause festering sores if they are not removed.

“But, in spite of its inconvenience to mankind, the plant is a very useful one, as it is very nourishing food for cattle. They grow fat upon it where it is abundant, provided they are allowed to eat as much of it as they choose. The seeds of the plant are used as food for man, and a great many of the natives subsist almost entirely upon it. They also make an infusion of the seeds in hot water, and after the infusion has been allowed to cool it is quite refreshing. Harry says it reminds him of small beer, with the beer left out.

“As the reader is already aware, we had adopted the native dress. The sheikh repeatedly informed us that the dress was all right as far as it went, but our complexions were so light that they attracted more attention than he considered good for us. It is true we were a good deal bronzed by the sun, but there was a wide difference in complexion between ourselves and the Arabs, and a still wider one between ourselves and the negroes. The sheikh said we must be darkened in some way and suggested indigo; we accepted his suggestion, and the next morning appeared in public with our faces stained to a degree which delighted the sheikh and all his followers. Harry said we needed nothing more to make good Moham-medans of us than a recital of the Moslem confession of faith.

“On and on to the south we went, occasionally meeting caravans carrying slaves and other products of Central Africa to the north. In general, the slaves seemed to be well treated, probably not out of any compassion for them, but because it was to the interest of their owners to have

their human merchandise reach the market in as good condition as possible. In the first caravans that we met the slaves were not fettered or tied together; but as we went further south, and consequently nearer the homes of these unfortunates, we found them fastened together with ropes extending from the neck of one slave to that of another, sometimes with their hands tied together, and sometimes with heavy yokes upon their necks. Usually they seemed quite indifferent to their fate, and on some occasions they were laughing heartily and apparently having 'a first-rate time.' Once while we were wending our way through a hilly country, the first knowledge of the presence of a caravan coming towards us was obtained by hearing loud peals of laughter which came from the slaves accompanying the caravan; something had excited their risibility to an unusual degree, as they were still laughing heartily when the caravan passed us.

"As we went south the fertility of the soil increased, and, although we carried a supply of water to guard against accidents, we found no real necessity for it, as the drinking places increased in number until they were rarely more than ten or fifteen miles apart. Renaud said we were getting into the valley of Lake Chad. We had entered the basin drained by that lake, but so slight was the declivity leading into it that we had hardly noticed the change of level. Oases became more and more numerous, villages were larger and more abundant than they had been, and on rising to the crest of a ridge we could see away to the southward an extensive forest of trees. We had been deceived so often by the mirage that we hesitated

to believe the evidence of our own eyes, so Harry shouted to Renaud to come and help us out of our trouble.

“ ‘What is that?’ queried Harry, as he pointed to the distant forest.

“ Renaud gave a long and careful look in the direction in which Harry pointed, and then answered that he didn’t know.

“ ‘It may be real trees, or it may be fly-away trees,’ he continued. ‘Stop! yes; no! yes, it is real trees,’ said he in a tone of confidence. ‘I see now; they’re real trees, and there’s a forest. We sha’n’t see any more desert for some time.’

“ We thanked Renaud for his information, as we had grown quite weary of the desert, and were very glad to get once more into the region of trees.

“ That night we camped in a fine grove of palms where there was a copious spring of pure water from which men and animals drank very freely. All around us the grass was green and luxuriant, and our camels, horses, and donkeys seemed to fairly revel in it. I don’t know of any more enjoyable scenes in our travels than to look at the animals of our caravan whenever we happen to reach a spot where grass is abundant. The camels do not show so much difference in their manners as do the horses and donkeys. Camels seem content to live upon the scanty growths of the desert, and are satisfied with shrubs and slender growths which the horse looks upon with disdain. They appreciate fairly well a good feed of grass, but their appreciation is not manifested by the eagerness and selfishness which the horse displays. Ordinarily, when

my horse is taking his allowance of barley, in the absence of anything else, I can approach him, pat him, and talk to him without any display of hostility on his part, but when he is enjoying a good feed of grass he will not allow me to approach him, for fear, apparently, that I will appropriate some of the herbage to my own use, and thus deprive him of an article of which he is exceedingly fond.

“We left this agreeable camping ground at an early hour in the morning, and, though the horses had eaten quite as much as was good for them, they manifested an unwillingness to be saddled up. As the day opened we saw a haze in the southward, indicating the position of the lake. As the sun advanced in the heavens it burned away this haze, and not long afterwards a mirage made its appearance, seemingly lifting the lake high in air. This mirage was followed by another, by which the whole southern horizon seemed to be filled with a vast forest, that changed in a little while to a broad and desert plain; towards noon all appearance of the mirage was swept away, and for the rest of the day the sky presented no further deceptions.

“When we were yet two days journey away from the borders of the lake we separated from our good friends, the Tinylkums, and bade them farewell. We were now in a region which is not scourged by the Arabs, except on rare occasions. It was considered safe for us to travel without the protection of a large caravan, at least, as far as the end of the lake. The road that our friends followed bore away to the eastward, leaving the lake at a considerable distance. One of the objects of our journey was to explore Lake

Chad, or, at all events, to stand upon its shores and look out upon its waters.

“We had paid half our backsheesh, or tribute money, to the sheikh, and now we paid the other half. Then, as is customary in this part of the world, we exchanged small presents with the sheikh, and when camp was broken the next morning our paths divided, and we saw each other no more. Our horses and camels rebelled somewhat, but not seriously; when our lines of march separated they seemed to think, naturally enough, that something was wrong about our movements that morning, but in a little while they were quite reconciled to the situation.

“Although we were still at a considerable distance from the lake, before the day ended we saw in the valley traces of a flood which is said to take place annually. The lake is situated in a vast plain, and this plain is elevated so slightly above the lower level of the lake that a considerable part of it is overflowed at the time of the annual rains. The ground was thickly covered with grass, and at the end of the day we entered a broad belt of trees which partly surrounds Lake Chad. It should be understood, however, that the forest is not a dense and continuous one, encircling the lake, but is rather a series of clusters with open spaces here and there. These clusters consist of palms, tamarinds, and other tropical trees; the open spaces between these clusters are quite fertile, and several kinds of grain are produced there, including maize, or what is known in America as Indian corn. On the last night before we reached the lake we camped near a fair-sized village, whose sheikh sent us a dish of kouskousou

made out of Indian corn. It seemed strange to us to come across such a familiar home production, here in the heart of wild Africa!

“In addition to grain they cultivate beans, lentils, cucumbers, melons, and similar things, so that we managed to fare very well without drawing upon our supplies. The natives appeared friendly, though Renaud said they might not have been had they known of the presence of Christians in our party. With our native dress and stained faces we were not suspected, and none of our people took the trouble to tell them what we were. They presumed that we were merchants from Mourzouk; the presumption being natural enough, as everybody who passed that way was either a merchant or a pilgrim on his way to or from Mecca.

“Well, here we are! camped on the shores of Lake Chad. I will let Harry tell you about the lake and what we did there.”

“We were very glad to reach this famous lake,” said Harry in his narrative. “Lake Chad has been known for a long time, for a thousand years or more, but very few white men have seen it; fewer, by far, than those who have looked upon the Victoria Nyanza, or Lake Tanganyika, both of them discovered within the last forty years.

“Lake Chad lies in about latitude $14^{\circ} 15'$ north and longitude $12^{\circ} 50'$ east. Its whole length is about one hundred and thirty miles, and in its broadest part it is nearly one hundred miles wide. According to Overweg and Clappertown, travelers who have visited it, the lake in summer contains about ten thousand square miles of surface, which

is increased to forty thousand or fifty thousand square miles in winter, by reason of the overflowing of the plain in which it stands. Our observations confirmed those of previous explorers, as we have seen everywhere the traces of the annual rise of the lake and learned of it from the natives.

“By the way, let me remark that our intercourse with the natives is somewhat restricted on account of their language. Only two or three of the people in our caravan can talk with these natives, and even they are not thoroughly familiar with the tongues spoken here. In talking with them, every sentence and word passed through three interpreters. We talked with Renaud in French, and he talked in Arabic with the interpreter, who conveys what we say to the negroes. It often happens that by the time a question gets to its destination it has entirely lost its meaning, and when the answer is returned its own mother couldn't possibly know it. If you ask how far it is from one end of the lake to the other, you're very liable to get the response that Tripoli is a larger city than Mourzouk, as if you should ask in America how long it takes to go from New York to Philadelphia, and be informed that George Washington was the father of his country.

“I said we camped on the shores of the lake, which is not strictly true, as the ground was swampy, and we could not approach with our animals nearer than within three or four miles of the water. Between us and the lake was a marsh covered with tall grass and reeds and extending as far as the eye could reach, broken here and there by clusters of trees. On each side of us the marsh was consid-

erably wider than it was at our camp, our caravan having been guided along a point or peninsula of higher ground that extended far out into the marsh. It was too late in the day for us to make an exploration of any consequence. We walked through the marsh towards the lake, sometimes half way to our knees in the water, and as the sun neared the horizon we concluded it wise to turn back.

“The next morning we were up early, in the hope of accomplishing something in our explorations. The native guide whom we had employed at the last village said it would not be an easy matter for us to find a boat, as the most of the boats on the lake belonged to the Bidduma, who are an independent people, and hold very limited relations with the inhabitants of the shore. He said the Bidduma are a piratical lot of rascals; occasionally they make raids upon the villages surrounding the lake, and carry the inhabitants into slavery. They have flocks of sheep and goats, and herds of cattle and horses on their islands, and they cultivate wheat, corn, and other vegetables. They are generally reluctant to receive strangers, owing to their fear of being plundered in the same way that they plunder people on the land.

“Our guides showed us a better way to the lake than the one we had followed on the preceding evening, which was really no path at all; in fact, the route by which he led us was a regular roadway about four feet wide and built up with reeds and rushes, with now and then a few logs of wood. About half way from our camp to the lake we saw some people from one of the villages engaged in cutting reeds, which they make into baskets and other

receptacles, and also use in constructing their dwellings. As we neared the lake we saw two boats quite close to the shore, each of them containing two men. As soon as the people in the boat saw us they pushed out further in the water. We gathered from our guide that these boats were doubtless on a man-hunting expedition, the intention being to capture some of the people engaged in cutting reeds. The villagers could not see the boatmen, on account of the fringe of tall reeds along the shore, while the boatmen could make out the position of the villagers by crawling through the reeds, and occasionally taking a survey of the ground before them.

“We hailed the boats, asking the men in them to come to land, but they were evidently suspicious of our intentions. The more we called to them, the further they went from us, and at length disappeared around a bend in the lake toward the right.

“While we were wondering what had made them go away we saw three boats coming around the bend of the shore towards the left. Evidently their object was a peaceable one, as they showed no hesitation in approaching us. They came straight up to where we were, running the prows of their boats on the spongy, reed-covered shore. We opened communication with them at once; at least, we tried to do so, but did not succeed very well, owing to the difference in language. The language of the Bidduma is a polyglot, and this circumstance arises from the fact that the islands of the lake have been the resort of people of many tribes and districts fleeing from oppression, and so many varieties of mankind have gone there at least — of

African mankind — that their language is made up of many tongues. The islands of the Chad have been populated in the same manner as the islands of the Adriatic, on which Venice is built.

“ However, we managed to make ourselves understood, though with considerable difficulty. We told the boatmen that we wished to hire their craft either with or without themselves, though we greatly preferred to have them along to manage the boats. We also told them that we would be greatly pleased if they would bring two or three more boats, and larger ones than theirs, if possible. The boats they had were not very commodious, as they were about twelve feet long by two feet in width, hewn from a single trunk, like the ‘ dug-out,’ which is frequent in many of the interior parts of the United States. Each boat was managed by two men, and could carry altogether four men with a fair quantity of baggage.

“ We told them about the two boats that had disappeared around the bend of the lake, and two of our new found friends, with one of their craft, went in pursuit of the runaways. As soon as they had gone we sent Renaud to camp to get a supply of provisions, weapons, ammunition, astronomical instruments, presents for the Bidduma chiefs, and a few other things. We were not obliged to make the journey back to camp ourselves, as we had arranged into one pile in our tents the articles that we thought we should need, and, therefore, no time was wasted in collecting them. By good luck it happened that just as Renaud hove in sight with several carriers laden with what we sent for the boat that had just left us turned the point with

another and came in our direction. The boatmen had succeeded in hiring one of the runaway craft, and with this we were content.

“We distributed our baggage into the four boats, and then arranged our party in the following order:—

“Dr. Whitney and Renaud in the first boat, Harry and the Arab interpreter in the second, Ned and the native guide in the third, and Yusef and Abdallah in the fourth. This was about the best arrangement we could make of the party, and, even as it was, whenever we had any occasion to talk with the boatmen the work was necessarily slow; the boats in such cases were brought together in a cluster and the babel of tongues that resulted in the communication of ideas was fearful and wonderful, indeed!

“And now behold us pushing away from the shore for the exploration of Lake Chad. We have left our camp in charge of our chief camel driver, and hope he will not take it into his head to go away without us.”

CHAPTER XIII.

AMPHIBIOUS INHABITANTS OF LAKE CHAD. — THE BIDDUMA.

IT did not take long for our friends to learn that Lake Chad was very well inhabited. Several times while they were making preparations for their voyage the waters near their landing-place were disturbed by hippopotami, or river horses. Ned said that these creatures were so numerous that the time was too short to pronounce their names in full, and he proposed to Harry that they should henceforth be called “hippos”; Harry assented, and the name was adopted.

“We did not like the looks of the hippos,” said Harry, in his account of their voyage on the lake. “They haven’t a pleasing appearance, their countenances presenting a fierce expression, and their mouths being so large that Renaud said they could go down through their own throats without hitting the sides. With considerable difficulty we ascertained from the boatmen that the hippos will not attack a boat unless they are provoked to do so, and even then the majority of them will try to get away if they can. Like nearly all wild animals, they are inclined to avoid the presence of man, but they are so numerous in Lake Chad that avoidance is not altogether easy.

“When we started away from the shore,” continued

Harry, "the hippos kept at a respectful distance, raising their ugly heads out of the water, and watching us with apparent curiosity. The men kept a sharp watch for them, and whenever one was seen in advance of a boat, the course of the latter was changed somewhat, or, if necessary, the craft came to a halt. The boatmen explained that if by any carelessness they ran violently against an old hippo, he was very liable to take it as a challenge and indulge in a fight. A fight with hippos in the water is very much to the disadvantage of a crew, and very detrimental to a boat. We had an accident of this sort, and I will tell you of it later.

"The place whence we started on our journey was a narrow bay, shaped somewhat like the letter 'V' greatly elongated. The whole length of this bay abounded with hippos who come up at night to feed on the grass, and if undisturbed, do not go far away in the daytime. They have regular paths from the shore to their feeding ground, and the natives take advantage of these paths to entrap the creatures when they come to land. Sometimes they dig a pitfall in a path, covering it with leaves and reeds, and it is covered so carefully that an expert eye is required to discover its existence. As the hippo walks along the path he tumbles into the pitfall, and the next morning the natives come and dispatch him with spears.

"Another way of killing him is with a spear poised above the path, and liberated by means of a cord as the animal pushes below it. Renaud tells us how he was once in a region where hippos abounded, and when he was walking along a path near the river he came upon a cord

stretched across it about six inches from the ground. His first thought was that somebody had dropped the cord; he was about to pick it up when he looked above his head and saw a cord extending out from the limb of a tree and supporting a heavy spear with a stone fastened to the handle to give it additional weight. Had he touched the cord while standing in the middle of the path he would have brought down the spear and, quite likely, would have been impaled by it.

“Renaud explained that the setting of these traps was a matter of very careful calculation; the cord across the path must be placed so high that the animal will not try to step over it, and, on the other hand, it must not be high enough to induce him to turn aside and flank it. The position of the spear with its weight must be so calculated that when the hippo pushes against the cord he will so loosen the apparatus that the weapon will fall upon him right between the shoulders. With everything properly adjusted, the trapper is reasonably sure of his prize, unless the animals take the alarm and go to a safer feeding place.

“As we looked down the little bay from the place whence we started, our view was interrupted by a series of islands. We discovered before going very far that a large part of Lake Chad is taken up by islands, some of them quite small, and others of goodly size. The smaller ones are not inhabited, but the larger and higher ones have a considerable population. Before leaving Mourzouk we were told that we would have great difficulty in navigating the lake, as the natives were hostile and very jealous of the intrusion of foreigners. We were agreeably dis-

appointed in this matter, as we found them friendly, with the exception of one island, where the people refused to allow us to land. They came down to the shore with spears in their hands and made such demonstrations of hostility that their words were unnecessary to explain their feelings towards us. They threatened us with destruction if we set foot on their land, and, as we did not wish to be destroyed just then and were not seeking a fight, we gave them the go-by and proceeded on our journey. Exactly why they treated us so uncivilly we were unable to learn, but came to the conclusion that they had recently entertained visitors who behaved so badly as to lead the islanders to adopt a policy of seclusion.

“During all of our first day upon the waters we were in a labyrinth of islands, and if our boatmen had deserted us we would have experienced great difficulty in finding our way back to the starting point. Our first night was passed on an island where there was a small village. Not more than half of the surface of the island was tillable, the rest being a marsh where the reeds and papyrus plants grew to a height of ten or twelve feet. The natives received us very kindly; they erected grass huts for our accommodation, and supplied us with kouskousou made from wheat and also from Indian corn. It seems that they cultivate both of these grains, together with onions, beans, and other vegetables. They had a good-sized herd of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats; we bought a sheep for about ten cents’ worth of copper wire, and the native who sold it to us acted as though he had made the best bargain of his lifetime. The sheikh was very attentive, and when we

left the next morning we presented him with a large cotton handkerchief on which was printed the Declaration of Independence and a portrait of George Washington. He had not the remotest idea of the printing upon the handkerchief, but the gaudy colors took his fancy, and his face wore an expression of ecstatic happiness.

“Most of the native dwellings on the islands are made of grass and reeds, but on the larger islands many of the houses are constructed with regular walls of clay or mud. The Bidduma are supposed to be governed by a sheikh who lives on one of the larger islands, and whose town or village is the most populous of all; but, as nearly as we could ascertain, his authority is more nominal than real, many of the islands being independent of each other, and acknowledging no government but their own. Sometimes these island communities get to warring with one another, and when they do so the rest assume a neutral position and let them fight it out. In such cases the quarrel does not end until both sides are pretty well exhausted.

“During the whole of the second day we continued in the labyrinth of islands, but our boatmen informed us that we were getting near the Inkibul, or open water, and would see it early on our third day. At the island where we made our landing near the end of the second day we saw on the shore some boats much larger than our own, and it immediately occurred to us that it would be well to secure some of these boats. We told Renaud to negotiate for them, and he proceeded to do so. Our boatmen had anticipated this, as they knew that their own boats were too small to navigate the open water with safety.

“They arranged to leave their own craft behind, and to continue with us on two of the larger boats, taking along others of their countrymen to assist in the navigation. The boats that they secured were much more comfortable than the small craft in which we had been traveling. One was about thirty feet long and four or five feet wide, while the other had a length of not less than thirty-five feet and a width of six feet. We saw larger boats than these, and when we started away we were accompanied by quite a flotilla, in which there was one boat not less than fifty feet long, and it seemed to me, although we did not measure it, fully seven feet across.

“These boats are rather low in the center, but high at the bow and stern, the bow being carried high in the air and reminding us somewhat of a Venetian gondola. These larger boats are not hollowed out from logs, like the ones we first saw, but constructed of planks from the fogo tree, fastened together with ropes and caulked with fine moss which is found on many of the islands in the lake. We found the boats quite seaworthy, but they leaked so much that one man was constantly engaged in bailing out each craft.

“We came out into the open water, and it did not require a great stretch of the imagination to believe that we were on the ocean. On the eastern side of the lake no land was in sight, the water stretching away as far as the eye could reach. There was a gentle wind blowing from the north and throwing up little waves, exactly such as the wind produces in any other body of water. During the day the wind increased, and, though the natives did

not appear to mind it, it seemed to me that navigation in these shallow boats was not the safest in the world. We wanted to cross over to the eastern shore, but the boatmen dissuaded us from doing so by saying that the natives there were hostile, and the lives of all would be endangered if we went there. We did not press them very hard, as we were not over-confident that we could get to the shore at all in case we ventured in that direction. A storm would swamp our boats and probably drown every one of us, and that was a result not very pleasant to contemplate, so we concluded to let well enough alone and stay where we were.

“We skirted the islands of the western shore, coming to land occasionally and making friends with the natives. Sometimes we found quite a difference in complexion and other peculiarities of the people of one island and those of another, indicating that they were not of the same tribe, but had come there from different localities. Between some of the islands and others there was not infrequently a difference of language; they had a good many words in common, but each island, as a general thing, had some words, especially the names of things, which were peculiar to itself. There was also a difference in costume, but this, however, was not great, owing to the fact that the Bidduma generally have no costume to speak of.

“The ordinary natives usually wear nothing more than a strip of cloth about the waist; sometimes, in cold or stormy weather, they wrap themselves in mats or blankets woven out of reeds and grass. The Bidduma sheikhs

mark their superiority over their subjects by wearing a white bournous over a tobe or shirt of black or brown material and covering their heads with turbans. Some of the people wear leather aprons about the waist and strings of beads around the neck, and these two articles constitute their only clothing. The effect is better than one might suppose, as the beads make a very pretty contrast against the black skin of the body; the skin is of a rich velvety appearance, and from constant exposure it runs no risk of blistering in the hottest African sun.

“We looked for articles of Bidduma manufacture, but found very few. They showed us some specimens of beadwork and coarse embroidery; we bought a few of these, but they were not particularly striking, and we did not invest heavily. Their blacksmiths are really very skilful in working in iron, but, unfortunately, their supply of material is very limited, and they have barely enough to supply themselves with spears and arrow heads. The greatest working skill displayed by these people is in the construction of their boats; this is natural enough, as they would be very helpless without boats, and, consequently, all the powers of their intellects are devoted to the development of their sailing and rowing craft.

“Their implements of agriculture are of the rudest sort, resembling those of barbaric people in all parts of the world. Their plows are the wooden implements of the kind that have been used for thousands of years; a limb or root of a tree serves as the share, while another limb or root forms the beam of the implement. This is drawn by a pair of oxen, and sometimes by a single ox, and on

some of the islands by a single horse or a pair of horses. Only a portion of the islands have horses, and we were told that the natives who are fortunate enough to own these animals are unwilling to sell them to the occupants of other islands than their own. They sometimes sell horses for transportation to the mainland, but thus far the number of these animals is not sufficient to create any trade of consequence.

“On the islands where cattle abound we had no difficulty in obtaining fresh milk. The rearing of cattle is quite an important business with these natives, and in every community there is an official whose title is the equivalent of ‘Inspector of Cattle,’ and the herds are under his charge. He selects the pasturage, orders the construction of yards where they are to be kept at night, and, in fact, has a general supervision such as is indicated by his title. He picks out the animals for slaughter or for sale, and where they are killed on the islands, the meat is eaten by the owners, and the hides are dried and used for whatever purpose they are adapted among these barbaric people. All the tribes dwelling on the shores of the lake are owners of cattle, and several hundred animals are not infrequently seen in one herd.

“I came near forgetting our adventure with the hippo, which I referred to a few pages back.

“We were going at a good pace through the water when the boat which was carrying the doctor and ourselves struck violently against something. I shouted, ‘A log!’

“Ned called out, ‘A rock!’ But the doctor, older and wiser than we, exclaimed, ‘A hippo!’

“The doctor was right; it was a hippo, and a large one, and savage, too.

“The boat trembled and recoiled, and as it did so we saw a monstrous, ugly head rising out of the water, directly abeam of us, and not more than ten feet away. He looked ugly, and his character of ugliness was increased as he came towards us with mouth wide open.

“Instinctively we seized our rifles, which were close at hand, but before we could bring them to bear the brute was upon us.

“One of the boatmen was sitting directly in front of Dr. Whitney, and his oar extended over the side of the boat. The hippo seized this oar and crushed it as though it were an egg-shell; then he turned to attack the boat, again opening his mouth as he had opened it before.

“It was a very unwise action on his part, that of opening his mouth, as it gave the doctor and Ned an opportunity to discharge their rifles directly down his throat, and, what was worse for the monster hippo, Ned’s rifle carried an explosive bullet which burst as it struck its mark. Explosive bullets are forbidden in civilized warfare, but there is no restriction upon their use among wild and ferocious animals. African hunters in these modern times always carry them, and so do hunters of big game in other parts of the world. There is no place where they come in more handily than when one is dealing with a hippo or a crocodile.

“The rest of our hippo story is soon told, as the explosive bullet did its work effectively; at any rate, it ended the attack upon us, and after receiving another



"IT GAVE THE DOCTOR AND NED AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCHARGE THEIR RIFLES DIRECTLY DOWN HIS THROAT."

volley, our assailant disappeared, leaving the boat and its occupants unharmed.

“Several times during the voyage our boats touched against these animals, the contacts always being accidental, and ones which we would have gladly avoided. The natives, seeing the effectiveness of our weapons, wanted us to make a general slaughter of these usually inoffensive creatures, which request we emphatically refused. We were willing to destroy noxious creatures like lions, panthers, crocodiles, and the like, but were quite unwilling to indulge in a general work of destruction.

“Crocodiles are numerous in Lake Chad, but less so than hippos. We saw them occasionally lying on sand-bars and enjoying the sun, and whenever we could get near enough to them without taking too much trouble and losing too much time we usually embraced the opportunity for a shot at them. Crocodiles are far more dangerous than river-horses, as they attack people while bathing, or those who may be accidentally thrown into the water by the overturning of a boat. For this reason every man is the crocodile's enemy and is ready to engage in his destruction. The crocodile is caught in pitfalls, very much the same as those in which the river-horse is taken, but with a difference consequent upon the peculiarities of the animal.

“On a sand-bar frequented by crocodiles a deep pit is dug of a circular form, leaving in the center a sort of island eight or ten feet in diameter; a stake is driven in the center of this island, and just at nightfall, some day, a young goat is tied to the stake. As the crocodiles come up from the water to land on the shore, they hear the

bleating of the kid, and at once proceed towards it. The pitfall has been covered over in the same manner as the one for the river-horse, and the crocodile, in his anxiety to reach the prey, falls into the trap set for him, and is caught. Sometimes several of the saurians will be taken in a single night.

“Crocodile flesh is eaten by the natives, and we were offered some steaks cut from a crocodile caught only a few hours before, but it smelt so strongly of musk that we were unable to eat it. Even when it is thoroughly boiled the musky flavor remains, and as for broiling or roasting, it only seemed to increase rather than diminish the, to us, disagreeable odor.

“Geographers have disputed a good deal,” continued Harry, “as to whether Lake Chad was fresh or salt; some of the Europeans who had previously visited it pronounced it a fresh water lake, while others declare that its waters are brackish and not fresh, while still others have assured us that it is undeniably salt. We have tasted it over and over again, have dipped the water from the lake with a tin cup and drank it, and we assert, with all possible vehemence, that it is absolutely sweet and fresh. And yet how can you account for the fact that men whose veracity is unquestioned have pronounced Lake Chad a salt lake? This is the way I explain it:—

“We have already told you that in winter the lake rises to a great height, owing to the flatness of the ground around it. As already stated, its area at low water is only one fourth of its area at high water. It receives the water of several streams which are nearly dry in summer, but have

a considerable volume at the time of the annual rains. The lake has no outlet, properly speaking, in its low stage, and consequently one might naturally expect it to be salt, but in the season of flood its surplus water is poured into a great basin called the Dodele, three hundred miles northward, by a broad channel which is known as the Bahr-el Ghazal. The throwing off of its surplus water every year saves the lake from becoming salt, and now there's something else I must tell you.

"The plain around the lake contains a good deal of natron, or soda; now, when the lake has overflowed this plain and the water is subsiding little ponds and pools are left wherever there is a depression in the ground. These ponds are slowly dried away by the heat of the sun, the water of the ponds absorbs the natron, and when a considerable portion of the water is dried away the remainder will have a very salty taste. It was doubtless from tasting the waters of these ponds surrounding the lake that previous travelers jumped to the conclusion which we have mentioned. Not very far from where we camped there was one of these little ponds, and the water it contained had altogether too strong a flavor of soda to be palatable. Dr. Whitney said it reminded him of the alkali lakes and ponds between the Missouri River and the Pacific coast of the United States.

"We found," continued Harry, "that the lake, large as it is, is very shallow; we frequently threw over a sounding lead, and nowhere did we find a depth of more than one hundred feet, and by far the greater number of soundings that we made were of less than fifty feet. At

the villages on the islands they showed us fishes taken from the lake, and we tried to eat some of them, but with no great success. Had we been hungry we might have found them eatable, but altogether they were no exception to the rule that fish of African rivers are of very poor quality. We saw some very large turtles and induced the natives to catch one for us. The flesh of these turtles was not at all bad; it had a decidedly musky smell, which mostly disappeared in the cooking. Our culinary arrangements were not of the best; perhaps if we had been able to submit our turtle steaks to a French *chef* they would have been as toothsome as one could wish; but, under the circumstances, I'm not inclined to praise them.

“Each of our boats carried a square sail made of leather, or rather of untanned hides, scraped thin, and made flexible by a great deal of severe pounding. Considering the size of the boat, the sail was small, and only allowed us to run before the wind. With sails and oars we made a speed of perhaps five and a half or six miles an hour; the wind increased on the second day and accelerated our speed somewhat, but not greatly. What we were aiming to do was to reach the southwestern end of the lake, where there was a town called Kukawa; from there we intended to send Renaud back to the camp, retaining the servants with us until he returned with the caravan.

“Suddenly in the afternoon of the second day the wind turned square around, blowing in our faces as we looked towards the south. This was a discouraging situation, but it lasted only a short time, as a squall came on, compelling us to seek shelter in a narrow passageway between

two islands. When it abated we found that the wind had gone back to its old quarter, and we were able to make good progress in the desired direction.

“We reached the landing place at Kukawa just at sunset; a crowd of natives came down to greet us, and the news of the arrival of our distinguished selves was speedily taken to the authorities. In a little while the sheikh of the place came in person to welcome us to Kukawa, and promised us all the hospitality it could afford. A house was placed at our disposal, and as soon as it could be prepared the usual dish of kouskousou was served, together with other things to complete our evening meal.”

CHAPTER XIV.

KUKAWA — SULTAN OF BORNOO.

KUKAWA is a place of considerable importance, as it was until recently the capital of the kingdom, or sultanate, of Bornoo, and is the center of a large trade. Caravans go and come in all directions; to Mourzouk and Tripoli in the north, Touat and Timbuctoo in the west, the Niger and towns along its banks to the south, and the Soudan and Valley of the Nile to the east.

The old saying, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," is brought to mind by the political history of Bornoo. For the last hundred years the majority of the rulers of this kingdom have died violent deaths, and the terms of most of them have not been long. Whenever an aspirant obtains the throne he is at once the object of conspiracies to deprive him of his powers and also of his life. These conspiracies are almost always hatched by the brothers or near relatives of the sultan and are usually successful. The sultan is strangled, or otherwise put out of the way, and his vizier and other officers under him, unless they happen to be in the conspiracy, are served in the same manner as their chief. A new ruler ascends the throne with great pomp and dignity, and his dignity lasts until a successful conspiracy is hatched against him, when he goes the way of his predecessors.

The sultan of Bornoo, at the time our friends visited that country, had been in office less than a year; he was said to be an intelligent, broad-minded, and benevolent man, who had reached his place of power by causing his brother to be put to death. Ned and Harry were unable to reconcile this act of the sultan with his alleged character, but the doctor explained that in Africa, and also in Asia, a benevolent and intelligent man might cause the murder of all his relatives without any detriment to his reputation.

“I’ve known,” said the doctor, “a man to be moved to tears at the illness of his favorite donkey; yet this same man had caused his parents and two of his brothers to be strangled in order that he might rise to a position of honor. Instances of this sort are quite abundant throughout all Africa, and it is quite possible that this sultan of Bornoo, who caused the death of his brother, may be all that is claimed for him in the way of mildness, and more, too.”

On the morning following the arrival of our friends a considerable crowd gathered around the house to get a sight of the strangers. It became noised about that one of the three was a doctor, and, as had happened in other places, the lame and blind were brought to him for relief. Unfortunately, most of the cases presented were incurable, and those who came for relief were sent away disappointed; a good many cases of ophthalmia were brought forward, and these the doctor was able to alleviate, though he could not, as a general thing, cure them. Fevers and diseases of that sort he could manage, but he had found by experience that it was advisable not to give any of the natives a supply of medicine to carry away and take from time to

time. On one occasion he came very near getting into serious trouble by intrusting a supply of medicine to a man, whom he thought intelligent enough to follow his directions. This is the story as he tells it:—

“The man was sheikh of a village,” said the doctor, “and complained of suffering from a fever. I gave him some medicine to be taken in three doses at intervals of twenty-four hours; in a few hours he came back again, and said he had forgotten to tell me he was suffering from worms, in addition to the fever, and wished to know if the fever medicine would help him in the other case. I told him it would not, and gave him some worm powder in six little parcels, instructing him to take one of the parcels daily until the six were gone, and he went home satisfied that he was on the way to complete recovery. Instead of doing as I directed him, he mixed the whole lot of medicine together and took it at once.

“Well, it came near killing him, but, thanks to a robust constitution, he managed to pull through, though he was at death’s door for three or four days. If he had died, I don’t think my life would have been safe in or around that village. I tried to explain to his friends that it was his own fault in taking the medicine as he did, but I don’t believe they understood me, or have understood the case to this day. It is very difficult to make them comprehend that if medicine will do any good in a given number of times at intervals of twelve or twenty-four hours that it is not just as well, and a great deal better, to take the whole at once and be done with it.”

All the belongings of our friends were brought from the

boats to the house which had been assigned to them. The Bidduma boatmen were paid for their services, and as soon as they received their compensation they immediately started for their homes.

They would not leave the landing place to come up to the town, as they were not on good terms with the people of Kukawa, and were afraid they would get into trouble. They remained close by their boats, and the handling of the baggage was performed by the servants of our friends, aided by several natives of Kukawa, who were hired for the occasion. Even as it was, some of the natives of the place fell into a wrangle with the boatmen at the landing, and there was a very near approach to a fight. A raid had been made not long before by a party of Bidduma boatmen upon a village near Kukawa, and several natives were carried into slavery. An intelligent native living in the house adjoining that of our friends told the doctor that the Bidduma stole all their slaves and never bought any. He had no objection whatever to slavery, but thought it exceedingly wrong for the dwellers on the lake to seize the dwellers on shore, and carry them into slavery without compensation. If they had bought their slaves from anybody who had the authority to do so there could have been no objection to the transaction.

“We despatched Renaud as soon as we could,” said Ned in his narrative, “to proceed up the western shore of the lake and bring along the caravan. He was accompanied by two guides, and in order to enable them to travel expeditiously it was necessary to buy horses or camels for them. This was a less expensive transaction

than I supposed; Renaud decided to take horses, as the country through which he was to pass was well watered and abounded in good grazing ground. Ordinarily, horses and camels were about eight or ten dollars apiece at Kukawa; he bought three horses which answered his purpose perfectly; one for himself at twelve dollars, and two others at ten dollars each. Serviceable saddles were found, one for two dollars, and two for a dollar and a half each. We paid for the animals and saddles in Maria Theresa dollars, of which we had a supply sufficient for our purpose.

“We were told that the prices of horses and camels vary considerably; sometimes the exportation of horses is forbidden and then the prices are low. When the prohibition is removed, and horses can be exported, the prices advance at once, and sometimes they double in the course of a few weeks. In the same way, if a caravan is fitting out at Kukawa, camels are worth from twenty to thirty dollars each, but if no caravan is about to start plenty of these animals can be obtained at the prices I have named.

“While we were in the market-place selecting the horses,” Ned continued, “a caravan of pack-oxen arrived from the Soudan. There were about fifty oxen in the train, accompanied by ten or twelve men, two of whom were mounted on horses, the others walking by the sides of the oxen, or in the rear. Each animal had a load of about three hundred pounds, and they were thoroughly docile and obedient. While the ox-caravan was waiting in the market-place the animals straggled somewhat, but when the word was given to move on in the direction of a

warehouse where the burdens of the beasts were to be stored, each ox dropped into his place exactly as a well-drilled soldier falls into his own position when ranks are formed.

“We inquired about the use of oxen as beasts of burden, and found that it is very common in this region where water and herbage are abundant, and the distance between watering-places is never great. Cattle are abundant and cheap, a good pack-ox costing not more than two dollars, and an ordinary one from a dollar to a dollar and a half. Care must be taken to feed the animals well, or they will fall away in flesh and strength with great rapidity; they are useless in desert regions like the Sahara where a caravan has to travel for days and days without water, and where food is scanty and poor. The market for pack-oxen varies just as does the market for horses and camels and for the same reasons; prices are high when pack-trains are about starting out, and low when no departing train is contemplated.

“It may interest you to know something about the prices of Kukawa. A milch cow is worth from a dollar and a half to two dollars; a good sheep, fat and ready for slaughter, costs fifty cents, and corn and wheat are worth about twenty-five cents a bushel. The prices of grains are lowest just after the harvest, resembling in this respect the markets of most other countries. Several kinds of beans are sold, and we found an abundance of onions, but we asked in vain for sweet potatoes and yams; they grow in the regions further south, but are not raised around Kukawa. There are two kinds of ground nuts,

which do not correspond with any nuts with which we are familiar; one of them, called kolche, is a very important article of food and is largely used, and they also have palm nuts which are eaten more by the Arabs than by the negroes.

“We went to the market nearly every day when our servants went there to buy provisions. The mode of dealing was very amusing to us, but I’m sure it would become very tedious in no great length of time. There is no standard currency for buying and selling; they have the dollar, as already stated, and we had no trouble in buying horses with these coins, but for small purchases for daily household wants, the dollar is of little use, as it is altogether too large, and they have no smaller coin in Kukawa. Formerly, their standard of currency was the ‘rotl,’ or pound of copper, but that has gone out of use, though the name is still retained. They have two other articles which may be called currency, one of which is the gabaga, or cotton stripes, and also the kungona, or cowrie shell. The shells are ordinarily valued at one thousand to the dollar; eight cowries or kungona are considered equal to one gabaga, and eight gabaga are the equivalent of one rotl; then for buying larger objects there are shirts of all kinds and sizes, worth all the way from six rotls up to fifty or sixty.

“Now look at the difficulties created by the intricate currency of the market-place. A small farmer who brings his corn to market on Monday, that being the great market day, will not take his payment in shells, nor will he accept a dollar in coin. The man, therefore, who wants to buy

corn, if he has nothing but dollars, must first change his dollar into cowrie shells, then with the shells he must buy a shirt, and after a good deal of bartering he buys the corn, giving the shirt for it. Sometimes the work of buying our supplies was so severe that the servants were fairly tired out when they got through with it.

“The market-place is open to the sky and contains only a few sheds and shelters from the sun. On Mondays there is always a great crowd of people there; there is a market every day in the week, but it bears no comparison with that of Monday, either in the attendance, or in the quality or quantity of goods for sale. On the small market days prices are always higher than on the great days, and articles offered on Monday are sought for in vain at any other time.

“In the provision section, as well as in other sections where goods of small value are sold, the dealings are usually conducted between the buyer and seller directly, but where the prices amount up into dollars, the business is in the hands of dellals or brokers, who announce beforehand whether the buyer or seller pays the commission of the transaction. If the buyer has to pay it, the broker endeavors to cheapen the price of the article, but if he receives his commission from the seller he endeavors to augment it as much as possible. The brokers go up and down through the crowd, carrying rolls of cloth and other merchandise, and calling out as they go the last offer they have received. This may be called the African style of auction, and Dr. Whitney says it is by no means unknown in other parts of the world. There was always a question

in my mind as to whether or no the auctioneer or broker, whichever we may call him, was acting in good faith, and calling out only the *bona fide* offers he had received.

“Our guide took us to the various sections of the market, bringing us in the course of our walk to that where slaves were sold. There were six or eight slave dealers, and as they saw us approach they drew up their human property in lines, where we could inspect them. The lowest number of slaves held by any dealer was seven, while the highest was twenty-nine or thirty. Previous to our arrival, the negroes were squatted on the ground in groups, each dealer having his own property in a group by themselves.

“All the slaves offered for sale were full-blooded and thick-lipped negroes, either from the Soudan, or from the valley of the Niger. They were of both sexes, and nearly all ages; there being no very young children, and no very old people in the collection. We guessed that the ages ranged from five years to forty-five or fifty, and all the slaves that we saw were robust and strong of limb. They were scantily clad, most of them wearing nothing but a loin cloth, though some of the women had strips of cotton, like large scarfs, thrown over their shoulders and gathered loosely around the waist. While seated on the ground the slaves were talking volubly, but when drawn up in line they observed strict silence. Most of them seemed indifferent as to whether they found purchasers or not, but some of the more intelligent ones looked longingly in our direction, as if they felt we would not be unkind masters, and hoped we would buy them. It was

a saddening sight, and we only remained a few minutes in this section of the market.

“The market is held outside of the town, or rather outside of one of the towns. Kukawa consists of what may be properly called two distinct towns, with an open space between them nearly half a mile across. Both towns are walled to guard against a sudden invasion by hostile tribes; one of them contains what was once the sultan’s palace, and also the homes of the wealthier part of the inhabitants. The other town is the abode of artisans and the poorer class of people generally.”

Kukawa, with its two towns, is typical of the kingdom of Bornoo. The aristocratic part of the place is occupied principally by Arabs who adhere to the Mohammedan religion. The other and larger part is mostly inhabited by negroes, some of whom have adopted Mohammedanism, though the majory are idolaters and have great faith in fetichism. The inhabitants of the kingdom are divided in the same way, the great mass of people being negroes, while the ruling class, very much in the minority, are Mohammedan Arabs of the Shooa sect, who invaded and conquered the country a long time ago, and have held it ever since. Revolts take place now and then, and those of the rebels who do not succeed in running away are either executed or sold into slavery. Originally it was the custom to execute them, but some of the thrifty sultans thought it a waste of good slave material to dispose of them in this way; hence arose the custom of selling them to merchants from Tripoli and other distant places where slave markets existed.

Bornoo is very much like Fezzan, though its population and area are both larger than those of the last named kingdom. As already stated, the country is not specially peaceful, and a seat upon its throne is rather unhealthy, as its occupants usually die at an early age, by strangulation or some other violent means of destruction. The sultans not infrequently change their places of abode with a view to lessening the number of intrigues against them, and every important town in the country has at one time or other been its capital.

The people of Kukawa impressed our friends as a very phlegmatic, indolent race, who could live, if compelled to do so, on very small incomes. Their houses are not at all costly, at least, those of the poorer class, as they consist of little more than four mud walls and a slender roof. Outside of the town they live in grass huts, which can be erected in a few hours, and the furniture of their dwelling places, either in town or out of it, consists of a few pots and pans for cooking and eating purposes, while the floor is used for sitting or lying down.

The chief disturber of the prevailing indolence is the great number of fleas which infest the houses, and are powerful enough to penetrate even the thick skin of the native of Bornoo. When an attack is made in force by these fleas it tends to break up, to some extent, the monotony of idleness, and gives occupation for the finger-nails, and also for the hands and arms.

“The house that was assigned to us,” said Ned, “was evidently well filled with fleas before we arrived in town; at least, that was the result of our experience during the

first night that we occupied the dwelling. The next day there was a large accession of the insects, caused, no doubt, by their curiosity to look at and possibly taste of the newly arrived strangers. Fortunately, we were well provided with Persian powder, which we scattered liberally in our clothing and bedding. We also tried the plan which is in vogue here of driving a small flock of sheep into the house a little before sunset. Great numbers of the fleas settled upon the sheep, and went away on them when the animals were removed. Whether the sheep liked the performance or not we never took the trouble to inquire.

“The men and women of the poorer classes are of a distinctly negro type, with flat noses and thick lips, and the hair kinky and curly like that of the true negro everywhere. By no stretch of the imagination can the men be called handsome so far as their faces are concerned, but they are well formed physically and capable of great endurance when compelled to undergo fatigue. The women, if anything, are uglier than the men, their figures being short and broad, their heads large, their noses flat and extending pretty well across their faces, while their ugliness, from our point of view, is increased by red beads or pieces of coral worn in the nostrils. The nostrils are very large, and the nasal ornaments are proportioned accordingly.

“Whenever a woman can afford it she wears a large silver ornament on the back of the head, and she takes great pains with her hair, which is plaited in the form of a helmet. This head-dress is very becoming, but less so on

a short, broad figure than on a taller one. The women wear loose dresses made of imported cottons; the dress is usually not unlike that of the civilized garment, being gathered loosely at the waist, and clearing the ground as its owner walks along. Some of the fashionable ones have their dresses trailing on the ground, and it is decidedly amusing to watch one of these belles as she promenades the street, keeping the ends of her scarf in her hands, and throwing her arms about in a very coquettish way.

“While waiting for the caravan to arrive we occupied our time in studying the people and town and making daily visits to the sheikh. The first time we visited him was in the busy part of the day, when he was surrounded by people to whom he was administering justice after the African fashion. Our conversations with him were rather limited, as our stock of Arabic was not large, and we were deprived of the presence of Renaud, who had hitherto served us so admirably as an interpreter.

“We managed to get along fairly well, however, and the sheikh was evidently proud of our visits; when our calls were in the middle of the day he used to ‘show off’ by discussing matters of science, especially astronomy and geography. His knowledge of these things was decidedly limited, but we did our best to make him believe he knew everything, and a little more besides. Later in the day, when his public audiences were over, we used to find him alone with his vizier, and then the conversation took a practical turn. He told us about the countries which surrounded Bornoo, the people who inhabit them,

and the rivers and mountains, together with other matters of interest to us. He wore a green cloak, which showed that he had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and was therefore entitled to high consideration from a religious point of view.

“Occasionally he invited us to dine with him, and one day we returned the compliment by inviting him to come and dine at our house. For the purpose of entertaining him we brought out some of our preserved delicacies, but he refrained from partaking of them freely, partly for sanitary and partly for religious reasons. He was afraid that some of the strange dishes might not be adapted to his character of Mohammedan holiness, and we were careful not to press him beyond the point of politeness. Roasted sheep and kouskousou were his principal articles of diet, and, like a good Mohammedan, he was a total abstainer from all intoxicants; at least, we assumed that he was, and never ventured to offer him any kind of wine or spirits. He was very well disposed towards us, and we kept careful notes of what he said about the roads and routes of travel, feeling that the information might be greatly to our advantage before long.”

CHAPTER XV.

ELEPHANTS IN BORNOO — HUNTING GAZELLES.

ONE day Dr. Whitney received a letter from Renaud announcing that he had safely reached the camp and found everything in order. Two of the camels had strayed, and were recovered with considerable difficulty. They were caught by some natives about twenty miles away from the camp, and had it not been for the honesty and veracity of their captors, it is doubtful if the travelers would have ever again seen the animals.

Renaud announced that he should start for Kukawa on the morning after despatching the note; he would have started at once on his arrival at the camp, but the horses were considerably fatigued, and he thought they deserved a few hours' rest. The riders of the horses also came in for their share of the fatigue, and a halt of a day would do them no harm.

In due time the caravan reached Kukawa, Renaud arriving there several hours in advance of the camels; he had mounted the best and freshest horse in the caravan, and thus was able to make good time over the road. He said that he had no serious difficulty on the journey, though it was said that a portion of the route was dangerous in consequence of the presence of a band of marauding Arabs. He had made the necessary arrangements for

defending the caravan in case of an attack, but it turned out that he had no occasion to try the strength and fighting qualities of his forces.

He added that his escape from harm was largely, if not altogether, due to a misfortune to another caravan. At one place there were parallel roads about five miles apart, connecting two villages or towns fifty miles from each other; he followed the road that was nearest to the lake, and both of them were considered dangerous. A north-bound caravan with slaves, ivory, and gold dust happened to be passing along the other road at the same time; the attention of the robbers was diverted to this caravan, which was attacked and plundered. The time taken for the capture and robbery of this caravan enabled Renaud and his party to get past the dangerous places without molestation. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good."

At another place along the border of the lake the movement of the caravan was hindered, but only for an hour or so, by the presence of a troop of wild elephants. The forests and plains of the west and southwest borders of the lake are the resorts of the elephants that go down to bathe in the waters, and in times of drought in the surrounding country they go to the lake to satisfy their thirst. They feed in the forest and jungle, and, though their numbers are not great, one may occasionally see as many as forty or fifty in a herd. As a general thing, they are not at all dangerous, if they are let alone, but occasionally there is a vicious brute among them who does not hesitate to attack horse, camel, or man that comes in his way. The low ground around the lake is infested with

mosquitoes, and to escape these pests the elephants, after their bath, make their way back to the higher ground. Renaud's party came in sight of one of these traveling herds of elephants just as it was about to cross their road. Very judiciously, they halted until all the members of the herd had passed.

Our young friends were quite desirous of seeing a herd of wild elephants; they had learned that the animals abounded in the neighborhood of the lake, but thus far they had no opportunity to see them. They asked the sheikh of Kukawa about the huge creatures, and were told that by making an excursion about thirty miles to the south and east they could have their wishes gratified. Accordingly, they obtained the doctor's permission to make the excursion, and, as the caravan was not expected to start for several days, they were off the next morning on an elephant expedition. The sheikh kindly supplied them with a mounted guide and an escort of two of his soldiers. An Arab interpreter went with them, and the understanding was that they were to make no attempt at killing any big game they saw, unless in the case of stray elephants that had been doing damage to the fields and gardens of the people. In that event the youths might try their skill, but were cautioned to be very careful, as they were not experienced hunters.

In this connection it is well to say that elephants abound in this part of Bornoo, and also in Adamawa, and all the region comprising the tributaries of the Niger. There are two kinds of elephants, one black, and the other a dirty yellow; they are all of the African species and are not

domesticated. They are hunted for their ivory, just as they are hunted in other parts of Africa. Their numbers have diminished greatly in the last twenty-five years, so that the quantity of ivory obtained from them is smaller than it was formerly. The elephants of South Africa are larger than those in the region in which our friends were traveling, and according to all the information which Dr. Whitney could obtain, the Bornoo elephant is not so fierce in character as his southern brother. The natives catch the elephant by driving him into pitfalls, and on rare occasions by shooting him. Fortunately for the elephants, the guns which the natives receive from the traders are about as useless against these huge pachyderms as they would be against a stone fortress. Hunters with rapid firing rifles especially adapted to elephant hunting rarely penetrate this part of Africa, their attentions being almost wholly turned to the southern and central parts.

In the afternoon our young friends reached the village in whose vicinity elephants were said to abound, and their guide promised them a sight of the big animals at an early hour in the following morning. He said the elephants went down towards the lake in the evening and returned about daylight, and the party must rise early to go to the spot where the herd would be seen.

The youths were up long before daylight, and quite nervous over the expected events of the day. They had brought their heaviest rifles (Winchesters) from Kukawa, and, as Ned expressed it, "enough ammunition to kill all the elephants in Bornoo." Harry suggested that, as they were not to disturb any of the herds they

might see, it would be just as well to leave their weapons behind during their morning excursion. Ned opposed this scheme on the ground that they couldn't tell what might happen, and called to mind the old adage, "What odd things you see when you haven't got a gun."

Ned's argument triumphed, and it was agreed to take the guns and ammunition along.

"They'll be heavy loads for us under the African sun," said Harry.

"Loads for us!" retorted Ned; "what are you thinking of? An African hunter never carries his own gun, and I'm not going to carry mine."

"Why not?"

"Why, don't you remember that every African hunter that we read about always has his gun-bearer at his heels? Don't you remember Stanley's faithful Kalil who had the proud position of gun-bearer to the great explorer!"

"Oh, yes, now I remember," said Harry. "Of course we must have gun-bearers; we ought to have thought of that before we left, and brought some along with us from Kukawa."

"Oh, never mind that," said the other; "we'll pick out two able-bodied natives here and make gun-bearers of them. Stop! what are we thinking of! There's our escort of two soldiers; they'll answer first rate as gun-bearers."

"That's so; we'll take them along. Where are they?"

The soldiers were hunted up, and partly by words, but mostly by signs, they were instructed in their new duties. Ned was uncertain as to whether it was the proper thing

for the gun-bearer to precede or follow his master, and Harry was equally in the dark on the subject. They finally concluded to have the gun-bearers go ahead of them, so as to make sure that the fellows would not drop out of sight just at the time they were most wanted.

All being ready, the party started; the mounted guide who came with them from Kukawa was dismounted, and he and the local guide led the way; then came Ned, and after him Harry, each being immediately preceded by his gun-bearer. The gun-bearers were evidently unaccustomed to their duties, as they were constantly shifting the rifles from one position to another, and frequently putting the muzzles of the weapons in the faces of their owners. The party was halted several times in order to give instruction to these fellows, and have them carry the rifles in such a way that no harm would be done in case the weapons went off accidentally. After a time everything was arranged satisfactorily, and the party reached the spot where it was thought the elephants would pass.

They were near the edge of a forest whence a broad stretch of open land extended to the edge of the lake, two or three miles away. The villager who acted as local guide climbed a tree to increase his range of observation, but the rest of the party remained on the ground. With various motions he enjoined perfect silence upon everybody; in order to secure it, it became necessary to separate the gun-bearers, as they persisted in keeping up a continuous chattering as long as they were near each other. Everybody kept his eye on the man up the tree, as he was to give the signal when the elephants came in sight.

Half an hour, at least, they waited, and Harry said the stillness was so great that you might have dropped a pin without knowing it. Suddenly the watcher waved his hand, and placed a forefinger to his lips, or rather to one of them, as their thickness prevented his covering both lips with a single digit. He pointed in the direction of the lake, and then they waited again.

After a time the youths heard the sound of snorting and low trumpeting, but there was nothing to indicate that the animals were alarmed in the least. Fortunately, the wind blew from the elephants towards the waiting party; if it had blown the other way the elephants would have caught the scent and changed their course.

The noise of the herd came nearer and nearer, and in addition to the snorting and low trumpeting, the tramping of the huge beasts became audible. On and on they came, following the pathway, which no doubt they had taken many times before. It was not more than fifty yards from where our young friends were concealed, and as the herd traveled along in single file, Ned and Harry counted no fewer than nineteen elephants in the procession.

First came an old fellow, evidently the leader in more senses than one, as he was the largest of the lot, and carried a huge pair of tusks. Behind him was an elephant without tusks, and doubtless the mother of the third member of the troupe, who appeared to be a youngster of one year, or perhaps two. Then followed another tusker, and behind him another mother and her promising son. The rest of the troupe was an indiscriminate lot, two with



"ON AND ON THEY CAME, FOLLOWING THE PATHWAY."

tusks, and the others with none. They varied considerably in size, the smallest of the lot being a baby elephant, who stood, as the youths judged, about three feet high at the shoulder. Ned whispered to Harry that he would like ever so much to get that little fellow alive and unharmed, and keep him as a pet. Harry answered, also in a whisper, that he, too, would like to have the youngster home in America, but he would have altogether too much of an elephant on his hands in undertaking to transport him to New York.

As the last of the procession passed our young friends rose to their feet, and when they did so Ned exclaimed :

“Oh, how I would like to have taken a shot at that big fellow in the front!”

“Yes, so would I,” replied Harry; “but I think he would have made it very lively for us if we had disturbed him.”

“No doubt,” was the reply. “From all accounts these big tuskers are very savage fellows when they are attacked. I wonder if we’re going to have a chance to try our guns on these animals?”

“I don’t know,” said Harry; “we’ll find out, if we can.”

The watcher descended from his perch in the tree, and addressed a question to the youths, which, of course, was unintelligible to them, but he managed to make them comprehend that he was at their service, and wanted to know what they wanted to do next.

It took some time to indicate to him that they wished to find a stray elephant not attached to any herd. After

awhile he took in their meaning, and indicated that he would show them what they wanted. Then he led the way back towards the village, but when they were yet more than a mile from it he turned from the path, and, after traveling for half a mile or so, brought them up to a cluster of huts surrounded by little gardens enclosed by palings four or five feet high, and forming a fence sufficient to keep out cattle and other ordinary invaders.

Ned observed that the fences of two or three gardens were broken down, as if some heavy animal had pushed against them and forced an entrance. The gaps thus made were five or six feet wide, and the gardens inside appeared to have been freshly trampled. The beans and other things growing within had been torn up and trodden upon, and evidently the intruder, whatever it was, had destroyed a great deal more than he had eaten. His footsteps were imprinted all over the ground, and showed that he was an elephant of no small size.

"I know what this means," said Ned; "there's been a rogue elephant here, and he has done all this mischief."

"What's a rogue elephant?" queried Harry. "Is he different from any other?"

"He's the same breed of elephant," was the reply; "but the peculiarity about him is that he goes about by himself, for some reason which nobody knows; he has been driven out of a herd, and no herd elephant will allow the rogue to come near him. When he tries to get into a herd that is a total stranger to him they drive him away, and even when elephants are caught and driven together into a big yard, if a rogue elephant happens to be among

them, they all keep clear of him. He is an outcast; just as a man in civilized lands is shunned by all respectable people when he has committed forgery or some other great crime. He takes delight in being as destructive as possible, and those who know the habits of elephants say that when a rogue gets into a garden or field he does ten times as much damage as a herd elephant under the same circumstances."

"He must be a very bad-tempered fellow," replied Harry. "Isn't he a tough customer to fight with?"

"Yes, that he is," answered Ned. "He is very much worse than any other elephant, and it generally takes a good deal of lead to bring him down. He is as bad among elephants as the grizzly bear is among members of the ursine family. He is not dangerous if let alone, but if attacked, he turns on his assailant instantly."

"But we'll see if we can bring down this fellow," said Harry, "if we can only get our guide to show us where he is."

They indicated to the guide that they wished to encounter the animal that had destroyed the gardens. The guide pointed in the direction of the forest and started toward it, the others following.

Ned's mention of the grizzly bear brought to his mind the story of the hunter in California who once came upon the track of a grizzly, and followed it for eight or nine hours. He then gave it up, because, as he explained to a friend, "the track was getting a little too fresh."

Harry was uncertain whether he wished to meet this rogue elephant face to face or give him a wide berth, but

he did not falter in his step, consoling himself with the reflection that the animal was probably, at least, a mile away. The indications were that the disturbance to the garden had been created during the night, and consequently the intruder had been away from there for several hours.

Both youths thought that the guide did not use as much caution as was necessary in following the game, but they concluded that, as the elephant was ascertained to be a good distance off, there was no need for especial care at that time. They went on in this way for about a mile, when the guide motioned them to be silent, and at the same time slackened his pace and stepped more lightly.

“Now!” said Harry, “is the time for business,” as he reached out and took his rifle from the gun-bearer, while Ned did the same.

Then the party crept along, and finally, on a sign from the guide, came to a halt. The guide waved his hand in the direction of a tree which stood in an open space somewhat more than an acre in extent. They looked at the tree, and then at the guide, whose face wore an expression of great satisfaction; he squatted on the ground, and acted as though his day’s work was ended.

The boys looked and wondered, and then went in the direction of the tree. They found that the ground beneath it was very much trodden, and concluded that this was the favorite resting place of the elephant that had disturbed the gardens. After inspecting the place they questioned the guide as to where the elephant was. He waved his hand in the direction of the forest, his movement embrac-

ing about one half the horizon, plainly indicating that he did not know where the creature could be found, and also intimating that he was not going in pursuit of him.

The guns were returned to the gun-bearers, and this was the end of the elephant hunt. Needless to say, Ned and Harry were greatly disappointed, but afterwards they candidly admitted to each other that they were not at all sorry they failed to come up and have an encounter with the big beast. Ned was again reminded of the Californian who followed the grizzly's track, and said that the track of the elephant under the tree was quite fresh enough for him.

On their way back to the village, the guide took them past another cluster of huts, where a garden had been arranged with the special object of capturing any elephant that intruded upon it. A circular space about twenty feet in diameter had been laid out and planted with the vegetables of which the elephant is most fond. A ditch fifteen feet across and ten feet deep had been dug quite around it, and the earth which had been taken out was carried three or four hundred yards away. A flooring of poles and palm leaves was built over the ditch, covered with earth, and the earth sown with the seed of a quickly growing grass. The flooring was made strong enough to bear the weight of a man without the least danger of its giving away, but if a good-sized elephant attempted to reach the garden he would crush the flooring and fall into the pit.

The pitfall was visited every day to ascertain if it contained anything. Elephants, and especially rogues, are not often caught in this way, as they are very wary, but

occasionally their hunger gets the better of their discretion, and in attempting to reach the garden they fall into the pit, from which they are unable to get out, provided they are promptly discovered.

Later in their journey our young friends heard a fable of which Ned made careful note. The fable is one of the traditions of that part of Africa, and Ned remarked that it reminded him of the well-known anecdote of the mouse and the lion; here it is:—

“An elephant one day fell into a pit which had been made by the natives for entrapping one of his kind. While he was bewailing his fate an eagle came along and sat on the branch of a neighboring tree; the elephant pleaded to the eagle to help him, but the latter said he could do nothing, except that he could carry a message that the elephant might wish to send to any one, and he added, ‘If there is anybody for whom you have ever done a good action send for him and he will come and help you.’

“The elephant thought a moment; then said:—

“‘I once saved the king of the rats and several hundreds of his subjects from being drowned; they had been caught and put into large jars, which were to be filled with water for the purpose of drowning them; I came along and broke the jars, setting the rat-king and his subjects free. But what can such a little thing as a rat do for me?’

“Just then a parrot flew by, and the elephant said:—

“‘Last year the queen of the parrots had been caught and put in a cage which hung outside the hut of a native.

I came along and pulled the cage into pieces, and the queen parrot flew off into the forest.'

"The eagle called to the parrot and told her to go and tell the queen that her old friend, the elephant, was in trouble, and also to tell the rat-king the same thing. The elephant insisted to the parrot that it was no use sending these messages, and he added: —

" 'Such little things as rats and parrots can do me no good.'

"In a little while the king of the rats came with millions of his subjects, and at the same time the sky was darkened by myriads of parrots, who came with their queen. The rats proceeded at once to dig at the edge of the pit and throw the earth into it, and at the same time the parrots broke off branches from the trees and threw them into the pit. The earth thrown down by the rats and the branches which the parrots brought quickly filled the pit, and the elephant walked away and joined his companions in the forest."

"That is certainly very like the fable of the mouse and the lion," said Harry, as Ned read off what he had written, "and it teaches the same moral."

"Undoubtedly," replied Ned. "The mouse and the lion incident is very old, and so is this, and it is hard to tell which of them has the greatest antiquity. One may have been taken from the other, or each may have an entirely independent origin."

The youths had breakfasted lightly when they set out on their expedition in the morning, and by the time they got back to the village Harry said he was so hungry that he

could have eaten the hind leg of a lion, to which Ned remarked that he thought it would take two hind legs of an ordinary lion to satisfy his own appetite. They had brought some provisions with them from Kukawa, to which was added a huge dish of kouskousou, which the natives had prepared in their absence, together with a lamb roasted on hot ashes. The boys made quite an inroad upon both of these articles, and what they left was speedily disposed of by the rest of the party.

By the time they ended their meal the sun had passed over the meridian, and the boys concluded that it was altogether too late and they were too weary to return that afternoon to Kukawa. They decided to rest for a couple of hours, and then try their skill at hunting the gazelles which abound in the open country around Lake Chad.

They carried out their plan, and were successful, both of them bringing down a gazelle at the first shot. It required considerable patience to accomplish their purpose, as they had to "stalk" their game, there being no cover by which they could get within range of these watchful creatures. They crept along the ground, taking advantage of every bush, bunch of grass, or any other inequality of the earth's surface, in this way getting within shooting distance without being discovered. The grass was full of mosquitoes, and those who are familiar with the habits of these annoying insects can readily understand that they relieved considerably the monotony of the hunt.

The gazelles which the youths secured were given to the natives of the village, and they immediately proceeded to have a feast; the meat was cooked after African fash-

ion, — that is, it was roasted in hot ashes in the manner already described.

The next day the party returned to Kukawa, where they arrived in safety. In spite of their failure to capture any elephants, the youths had greatly enjoyed the excursion and were very glad they made it. Ned said they could console themselves for their failure by remembering that they hadn't lost any elephants, and therefore had no real occasion for finding any. Harry remarked that as fables were in order they might bear in mind the old one of the fox and the grapes, where the fox, after vainly endeavoring to get at the fruit, denounced it as too sour for the vulpine taste.

CHAPTER XVI.

LEAVING KUKAWA. — KILLING A BIG SNAKE.

IN due course of time the caravan was ready for its departure from Kukawa. Dr. Whitney and his nephews paid a farewell visit to the sheikh, being careful to take with them the customary presents which he would expect in return for his civility. He volunteered to give them letters to the governor of Kano and the king of Sokoto, with whom he was then on friendly terms, a favor for which the doctor was very grateful. The sheikh ascertained from Dr. Whitney that he intended to start shortly after sunrise on the following morning.

Just as the caravan was getting in motion the sheikh made his appearance, mounted upon horseback and accompanied by his vizier and all the rest of his retinue. The sheikh and his followers accompanied the caravan for about two miles on its way, and then turned back to the town. Hearty good wishes were exchanged between the travelers and their late host, the sheikh saying that he believed the party would encounter no trouble in entering Sokoto, and ultimately reaching Timbuctoo.

The general course of travel was to the westward, but the route meandered considerably, owing to the location of the best places for obtaining water and good grass, and also owing to the configuration of the country. As our friends

left the basin of the Chad they found the air cooler and more bracing than it was in the valley. There were stretches of desert here and there, but on the whole the country was fertile, and they were surprised to find as much as they did under cultivation. Native villages were quite numerous, and in the neighborhood of every village there were gardens where beans, cabbages, onions, and other kinds of vegetables grew, and there were fields of wheat, corn, and millet. Considering the few needs of the people of this part of Africa, they were certainly quite industrious, and their appearance indicated that they had no lack of food. Ned remarked that there was no occasion for them to perform any hard work, where nature was so kind to them and civilization had not penetrated and developed wants that they had not known before.

All the natives that our friends saw, with the exception of those living in the town, were very scantily clad, and Harry estimated that two dollars a year was sufficient for a man's clothing, while the cost of a house which a native would consider good ought not to exceed ten dollars. Ground nuts for food could be had in most places for the digging of them, and the diet might be varied by the fruit of the palm and other trees. By working one month out of the twelve a man could take good care of his family and provide for all their wants, and it showed a decided inclination to industry for a man to consent to work two or more months in the year.

"That's quite true," said Dr. Whitney in reply to Ned's observation, "and it is an open question whether civilization is of any benefit to these people. With it come

new wants that require greater industry, and with civilization they are sure to take on new vices. Rum, the great curse of the world, is certain to be one of the first imports to a newly opened country, and it brings all kinds of demoralization. It forms a considerable, and sometimes the larger part of the cargo of every ship trading to the African coast, and is almost the only article which is constantly in demand, for the reason that it is capable of more rapid consumption than anything else in the whole list of trade goods.

“African chiefs and people get to warring with one another in consequence of rum,” continued the doctor, “and hundreds of thousands of Africans have been sold into slavery on its account. I could deliver you a long lecture on this subject, but will refrain, closing, as I began, by saying that it is an open question whether these black people are benefited by civilization. When the slave trade was respectable, two hundred years ago, British noblemen and other sovereigns were stockholders in it. They claimed to be interested in it as a philanthropic movement, their aim being to put the African pagans in the way of becoming Christians. No doubt the establishment of missions in Africa has been a benefit to the natives, and if the people could have the missions and missionaries without the baneful effects of commerce there is no doubt that civilization would prove a blessing. But when we strike a balance sheet, I’m very much afraid that the good is fully offset by the evil.”

Ned remarked that he thought civilization would prove a boon to the people of Africa by bringing about the sup-

pression of the slave trade. On that subject Dr. Whitney answered as follows : —

“ There can hardly be two opinions on this subject ; the foreign slave trade has been entirely broken up ; that is, the carrying of negroes as slaves to America, and other distant parts of the world. There remains the local trade which we see here now, in which the negroes are taken from their native lands and carried to Morocco, Tripoli, Egypt, Arabia, and other countries under Mohammedan control. Slavery is permitted by the Koran, the Bible of the Moslems, and, therefore, it is impossible for any Moslem ruler to abolish it entirely without risking a revolt among his people, but the majority of the Moslem rulers, through the influence of England, France, and other European countries, have greatly curtailed it and reduced it to a very mild condition.

“ In most of these countries a man is obliged to treat his slaves so well that they will not run away, as he cannot make use of the officers of the law to capture them in case they leave him. Some Moslem countries limit the number of slaves to be brought there in a year, and the number is kept so low as to threaten the extinction of the institution in the course of time. The Arabs are the principal slave dealers, and they complain that their business is greatly reduced by foreign interference. Still, a good many caravans of slaves are constantly moving from the interior to the coast, and, although the raids and hunts for slaves are quite frequent, they are less so than formerly. English influence has been exercised everywhere that it can be for the destruction of this dreadful commerce, and,

as England's power is constantly increasing in Africa, the day is probably not very far distant when the traffic in human flesh will practically come to an end."

"All civilized nations, whatever their feelings toward England," said Harry, "ought to assist in this work."

"So they do," replied the doctor; "with the single exception of Portugal, and even that country, while it takes no steps to suppress the trade, does not defend it. It permits its traders to do what they please in Africa, or any other savage country, and if they chance to deal in slaves the government doesn't interfere with them. Neither does it defend them when they get into difficulties with the warships and the officials, generally, of other countries, in consequence of their trading in slaves. In South Africa, the Dutchmen who have settled there have a slave system of their own, as they have taken into captivity the Kaffirs and other natives of that country. This is the reason, so it is claimed, why the English have endeavored to subjugate the Dutch colonies and bring them under British rule, not so much through a spirit of aggression as through the desire to make an end of slavery."

There was some further talk on the subject, which was suddenly dropped in consequence of an excitement among the people at the head of the caravan. Our friends rode forward to ascertain the cause of the trouble and found that a large snake was sunning himself right in the road where the caravan had to pass, and showed no immediate intention of getting out of the way. It is proper to add, however, that the reptile had not been disturbed, as no one ventured to go near him.

The snake was partly coiled and partly uncoiled, — that is, the portion of his body next to his head formed a single coil, while the other half of his body was stretched out on the sand. Dr. Whitney dismounted and gave his bridle to one of the attendants; then he advanced with Renaud to within about fifty yards of the snake, closely followed by Ned and Harry, who had also dismounted. Each of the three carried a rifle, and at the distance mentioned they all halted; then, at Dr. Whitney's suggestion, Renaud stamped on the ground, and at the same time threw a small stone which struck the snake's body.

The serpent raised its head to see what all the noise was about; as he did so the doctor sent a bullet through it, and this bullet (a solid one) was immediately followed by an explosive bullet from Ned's rifle, and another from Harry's. The three shots were well aimed, all hitting their mark, and at the end of the rifle practice the snake did not have much head left upon him. He writhed and twisted at a frightful rate, and for some time no one dared to approach him for fear of being caught in his coils. In his writhing and twisting he worked himself down the side of the slope at one side of the road, and thus gave the caravan an opportunity to proceed on its journey.

Our friends stayed behind with their horses and one of their mounted attendants in the hope of getting an opportunity of measuring the length of their prize, but all in vain. They estimated that he was about fifteen feet long and six inches in diameter at the thickest part of his body.

He belonged to the python, or constrictor family, and was certainly a very disagreeable antagonist to encounter.

While they were looking at the creature and estimating his dimensions several negroes from a neighboring village made their appearance, and manifested great delight at the slaughter of the serpent. As nearly as our friends could make out, the natives said that he had haunted the neighborhood for some time and destroyed several of their lambs and young goats. On this account they were glad that he had been killed, and were furthermore delighted when Dr. Whitney intimated by signs that they might take the snake and do whatever they pleased with him. One of the men had some ten or fifteen feet of cord around his waist. He removed this cord, made a noose on the end of it, and by using a forked stick inside this noose he managed to get it around the creature's neck. Having secured the snake in this way, they dragged him off to their village, in spite of his continuous writhing.

As our friends mounted and rode away to overtake the caravan, Ned asked the doctor what the negroes would do with the snake.

"Oh, they'll take off his skin," said the doctor, "and then they'll cut him up and eat him."

"Do they really eat those horrid things?" queried Ned.

"As to the people here I can't say positively, but in most parts of Africa the natives consider them all right, and I assume that when those negroes took that snake away they had an object in so doing; if they only wanted the skin they could have removed it here."

"That's so," said Ned; "they could have skinned the

snake on the spot and made an end of the job, unless they wanted the rest of him for something ; but, come to think of it, if one could set aside his prejudice against serpents he ought to find them very good eating. They are very clean feeders, killing their own game, and eating it on the spot. They never touch anything in the least degree tainted ; in fact, there isn't a cleaner feeder anywhere than the snakes of the constrictor species, and, in fact, the great majority of snakes."

"Quite true," chimed in Harry, "but, for all that, I prefer mutton chops and beefsteaks to boa constrictors."

"Did you ever see the flesh of a rattlesnake or of the American black snake after the skin was removed?" queried the doctor.

Both the boys gave a negative answer.

"Well," said the doctor, "the flesh looks wonderfully like chicken, and so far as its appearance goes it is just as delicate ; those who have been able to conquer their prejudice say that it tastes wonderfully like that bird."

"I've not the least doubt of it," said Harry, "and I've heard that in some countries snakes are a delicacy, and make the choicest dishes that can be offered to the stranger."

"I wonder," said Ned, "if they always tell the stranger what they're giving him when they offer him a dish of snake."

Harry was unable to settle this question, and after some further talk on the power of prejudice the subject was dropped, and the thoughts of the travelers were turned in another direction by meeting a caravan on its way to

Kukawa. It was a motley collection, as the caravan was made up of camels, pack-oxen, donkeys, horses, and slaves, together with camel drivers, horsemen, and people of several sorts on foot. There were about thirty camels, forty or fifty pack-oxen, twenty men on horses, and about as many donkeys; the biped part of the caravan was about as varied as the quadrupedal portion, there being two or three kinds of negroes, and as many varieties of Arabs. Ned said he shouldn't wonder if there were some galvanized Arabs like themselves, — that is, Europeans in native dress, and with their hands and faces stained with indigo.

The chief camel drivers of the two parties held a short conference, and then each caravan moved on its way. Luckily, the path was wide enough at that point to enable them both to proceed at the same time without collision, which is not by any means always the case in African travel. An African roadway is usually about three feet wide, at least, the trodden portion is, and if the country is not encumbered with forest or brushwood it can be as wide as one desires. Camel caravans avoid wooded ground as much as possible, as it is often necessary to cut away the growth that would be likely to impede the progress of the camels. There is no government force to keep the routes in traveling condition, and especially in the matter of cutting a way through a forest, where constant supervision is required. Tropical growth is so rapid and vegetation pushes with such celerity that the foliage needs almost daily attention to prevent its overrunning the roadway.

In the journey of our friends westward it was necessary to have a local guide for every day, and sometimes twice in a day. There were so many paths crossing and recrossing, and running in all directions, that only a person thoroughly familiar with them could find his way. There were no maps of the country, and the great majority of the natives had no intimate knowledge of it further than a few miles from their homes. The numerous caravans that pass through the land have built up a business for the local guides. These men have the good sense to divide the country off into districts, and whenever the edge of one district is reached there is a guide at hand who will undertake to show the way to the next station. Usually the guides began their service in the morning and ended it at night. As before stated, two guides were sometimes employed in one day. Our friends suspected that this was a trick on the part of the guides, and not at all necessary, as the price paid for one's services was the same for six hours as for a whole day, but inasmuch as it only required a few cents' worth of goods to compensate one of these men they did not complain. Ned remarked that there was a further reason for accepting the situation as they found it, and that was because complaints would do no good.

On the tenth day after leaving Kukawa the caravan approached a swampy region in which were many patches of forest; some of the wooded country was densely and some of it lightly covered, and the caravan made slow progress, owing to the wide detours it was obliged to make to keep as much as possible in the open country. In the

rainy season a great part of this land is flooded, and looks like a vast lake dotted with islands. At the time our friends visited it the land was mostly dry and thickly covered with grass, the swamps occupying only the lowest portions. There was no danger of suffering from lack of food, as there were many fields of corn, and guinea fowls were so numerous that one could hardly walk a step without disturbing a flock of them, and so fearless that they could be knocked down with sticks, thus rendering shooting unnecessary.

Our friends pronounced these guinea fowls delicious, and said that they greatly softened the asperity of the journey through Africa. Ned wished that these birds could be stretched in a line all along their route of travel, and he was sure that there were enough to form the line without difficulty.

In addition to guinea fowls, there are two or three kinds of water fowls, partridges, and several species of antelopes, while wild hogs, elephants, and monkeys were in abundance. They saw traces of elephants, but did not see the animals themselves, though they saw quite a lot of monkeys, singly, and in groups. One group was quite tame and played along the roadside about fifty yards or so from the travelers, affording the latter considerable amusement, and no doubt some to themselves. They chased each other up and down trees or along the ground, indulged in mimic fights, and in other ways disported themselves in simian fashion.

All the quadrupeds of the caravan had reason to enjoy this part of the journey, as food was abundant, there was

no lack of water, and the marches were not long. When the party was going into camp on the first day after entering this region, Ned and Harry took a stroll towards a cluster of tall trees at the side of a little lake. They had reached the edge of the cluster, and were just entering among the trees when a lion rose with a loud roar only a few yards in front of them, and bounded away as fast as he could go. The youths were unarmed, except with shot-guns, but even had they carried their rifles with them it would have been necessary to handle them very quickly, and the bullet must needs be a rapid one to have any prospects of hitting the lion. In a very short time he disappeared in another patch of forest, but whether he stayed there or kept on until he was far in the region of safety our friends were unable to say.

“That probably clears out this little patch of woodland,” said Ned, as the lion disappeared. “We ought to be able to walk around safely now.”

Hardly had he spoken when there was another commotion in the underbrush, and another tawny figure bounded into sight and away. The boys had observed that the first animal which departed wore a huge and shaggy mane, and the second had none, so they concluded that the pair of animals were lion and lioness, and Harry suggested that they might find the den of the animals, and possibly some lion cubs there.

“I hardly think so,” said Ned, “for two reasons; I don’t think that either of these animals would go away and leave their helpless young ones to themselves. It isn’t in the nature of the lion any more than of most other

beasts to desert their young in this way ; and, furthermore, I think I've read in a book of natural history that a pair of lions live and hunt together until the cubs are born, when the lion leaves the lioness to take care of herself and her children, and goes off hunting on his own account. You see they both ran away before we attacked them ; they only came into this bit of forest and that is all. I don't believe that we'll find any cubs, but we'll look, anyway."

"If we find them," said Harry, "what'll we do with them?"

"That's the question, sure enough," said Ned ; "I'm sure we don't want any cub lions in our baggage, but we'll take them along to the next town and give them to the sheikh ; he'll be glad to have them."

"Never mind," was the reply. "We won't trouble ourselves about disposing of them until we find them ; remember the old adage about 'counting one's chickens before they're hatched.'"

Conversation ended at this point, and the youths began to search the ground carefully. They could not find any lion's den, or any place that would serve the purpose of one ; furthermore, they did not find any cubs, and therefore had no further perplexity as to how they would dispose of them. Harry proposed to continue their walk to the patch of forest where the lions disappeared, but this was opposed by Ned on the ground that they had no weapons with which to meet the monarch of the forest, and it would be more prudent to stroll in another direction. The result was that before very long they were back again in camp.

In the afternoon of the next day the caravan reached the bank of the river Gonduku. It was not far from three hundred yards wide, and flowing with a current of about three miles an hour. Its depth varied a good deal, being in some places quite shallow, and in others ten or twelve feet from surface to bottom. The crossing of this river by an entire caravan could not be accomplished in an afternoon, and therefore the expedition went into camp on the spot.

“We were greatly amused,” said Ned in his journal, “at the way the natives crossed the river. As soon as it was decided to form camp Harry and I went down to the bank of the stream to have a look at it. We noticed at the edge of the river some logs from eight inches to a foot in diameter, and six or eight feet long, some on one side of the stream, and some on the other. There were also some large calabashes or gourds lying among the logs, and we wondered what they were there for. We had not long to wait to find out. We hadn’t been seated more than ten minutes before a man and a woman came along, and, without noticing our presence or saying anything, began to utilize the articles we had been studying.

“They removed what little clothing they had, made it into bundles, and placed them on the tops of their heads. Then the man took one of the logs, rolled it into the water, jumped astride of it, and with hands and feet paddled it across the river. The woman at the same time mounted astride of one of the large, double calabashes, and it served her the same purpose that the log served for the man. They left the log and calabash among those on the

other side of the river, adjusted their clothing, and went away. We learned upon inquiry that these were the common ferry boats of the region; they were the property of anybody who chose to use them, and I suppose that by a careful calculation there were always enough on either side of the river to accommodate all those who would be likely to use them.

“We saw in the course of the afternoon a dozen or more people crossing the river in this way, and they showed great dexterity in maintaining their positions astride of the logs and calabashes. In one instance, a man led a donkey across; he had a halter about three yards long, and it required all his efforts, combined with those of a man who accompanied him, to get the obstinate beast into the river. After he was afloat the donkey went along fairly well until he reached the middle of the stream, when he suddenly refused to swim further, and manifested a desire to go back to where he started. The result was he pulled the swimmer off the log, and the latter had all he wanted to do to keep hold of the halter with one hand and of the log with the other. He did so, however, and managed to get astride of the log again, but the two of them came to land fully a quarter of a mile below the point whence they started.

“We borrowed some of these logs, and gathered others with which to make a raft to ferry our baggage across. It required very nearly the whole day for transporting our goods from one bank of the river to the other, but we finally got everything over in safety. At every trip we led across two of our animals, and on some occasions three

or four, compelling them to swim where the water was deep. The camels were more obstinate than the mules or donkeys; the camel is essentially designed for dry places and not for wet ones, and a cat is no more reluctant to enter the water than is this tall and ungainly beast. The camel drivers did a good deal of cudgeling, and used a great deal of loud language in getting the camels across. I supposed from the sound of them that some of their remarks were very naughty, but, as they were in a language which none of us could understand, we were not at all shocked by the performance.

CHAPTER XVII.

A TOWN IN MOTION — STORY FROM THE NIGER.

AFTER the caravan had crossed the river, another day was consumed in arranging everything, as the baggage, during the transit of the stream, had become very much mixed up. There was a disturbance in camp that night, caused by lions prowling in the vicinity. Several of the horses broke their halters, and the rest tried very hard to do the same; fortunately, those that managed to free themselves were so frightened that they refused to leave their companions and so remained within the camp. If they had been less alarmed than they were, it is probable that they would have run away.

The whole camp was aroused, and our friends came out with their rifles, with the hope of being able to lay their disturbers low, but the night was so dark that it was impossible to see anything more than a few yards away. The chief camel driver thought that if the doctor and the youths would go outside the camp and hunt around they might be able to find the lions, but, as far as could be observed, the trio did not show an inclination to go out upon that hunt. The doctor suggested that the camel driver accompany them and show the way; whereupon that individual discovered an imperative necessity for his remaining with his animals.

In the hope of scaring away whatever carnivorous beasts might be in the neighborhood, our friends fired several shots in the air, which evidently had the desired effect, as the horses and camels became quiet after awhile, and our friends went back to their tent and to bed again. Soon after sunrise in the morning the caravan was under way, and the river was left behind.

About the middle of the forenoon the party met the most picturesque caravan they had yet seen on the road. We will turn to Ned's journal for a description of it:—

“I couldn't find out,” said Ned, “exactly what it all meant, but it seemed like a village or town on the move. Altogether there must have been two hundred camels, and more than that number of horses, donkeys, and pack-oxen. As for the people, I don't believe there were fewer than seven or eight hundred, and they were of all ages, classes, and I could almost say colors; certainly there were two or three shades of black on their faces, and as many shades of red, none of them being at all light. The men were mostly mounted on horses or camels, and the women and children either rode on donkeys or oxen or walked by their sides.

“Nearly every beast of burden in the caravan carried something in addition to his rider or riders, and their burdens were mostly household goods and provisions, the balance consisting of merchandise, which was probably cheaper at their starting point than at their destination, and was intended for sale at a profit. The chief of the party was a venerable old man, and he led the way, walking like a young man at the head of the procession, and in

front of his camel, which he held by the nose-cord. Many of the people not only carried household goods, but the houses themselves; perhaps I ought to explain that the houses were not made of solid walls and roofs, but were simply grass huts, such as one sees all through Africa.

“We turned out of the road and halted while this motley procession went past us. First there was a string of camels led by the chief, as already stated; then a herd of cattle, probably the shiekh’s property; then a group of men on horses, closely followed by some women and children on donkeys; then more camels, more donkeys, more horses, and so on to the end. There were flocks of sheep and goats, and in one group we saw about twenty milch goats, unaccompanied by their kids. Colts and young camels were playing about in different parts of the caravan, sometimes getting among the cattle and sheep, and sometimes becoming mixed up with the laden camels and horses; altogether it was a strange and interesting sight. Harry thought it would be fun to go back and watch these people crossing the river; I thought so, too, but we did not suggest it to the doctor.”

The day after meeting the strange-looking caravan our friends found themselves in a region where elephants abounded, and several times they came across the tracks of these huge beasts. They also saw the track of a rhinoceros, at least, the Arabs and natives said that it was made by one of these animals, and Renaud remarked that it would be interesting if they could happen upon an elephant and rhinoceros together.

“Why so?” queried Harry.

“There would certainly be a fight,” said Renaud; “and a fight to the death. All over Africa the elephant and rhinoceros have a mortal hatred of each other, and whenever two of them meet it is absolutely certain that there will be a battle ending in the death of one, and not infrequently of both.”

“Did you ever see a fight of that kind?” queried Ned.

“I never saw two of these creatures fighting,” said Renaud; “but I know of people who have seen them, and I, myself, have seen a rhinoceros and an elephant lying locked together, each having killed the other. The elephant uses his tusks, plunging them, if possible, into the sides of his adversary, at the same time giving terrible blows with his trunk. The fighting weapon of the rhinoceros is his horn; a very solid one, which is strongly mounted on his nose. If he can manage to insert this horn in the elephant’s belly he inflicts an enormous wound which is nearly always fatal. The great strength of both animals is brought into play, and so fierce are they in assaulting one another that the battle never lasts long; they tear up the ground and push down trees of considerable size in their struggles, and as the fight is going on they give vent to loud trumpeting and bellowings, so that they can be heard for a long distance. It is said—but I don’t know how truthful it is—that lions, panthers, and other animals sometimes come to look on at this battle, but never interfere.”

“I don’t suppose,” said Ned, as Renaud paused, “that any creature with the least particle of good judgment about him would interfere in such a matter. If he did he

would be pretty sure to get the worst of it, as he would run the risk of being crushed to death between the two opponents. I wonder if the lion and the elephant are friendly to each other?"

"I don't think they're at all friendly in the full meaning of that word," said Renaud; "but they are not such enemies as the elephant and rhinoceros. You never heard of elephants and lions being together, but on the other hand I don't think I've ever heard of their fighting; if they ever get into a quarrel it is probably through an accident. If an elephant, walking in the vicinity of a lion, were suddenly struck by an arrow or spear from the hands of a native concealed in the top of a tree, the great brute might think that it was thrown by the lion. If that idea entered his head he would be likely to charge the blow to the lion, and immediately charge upon him; but of course this is not likely to be a frequent occurrence. As to the other animals of the forest, they don't appear to be on bad terms with one another. Africa is very large, and there's room enough in it for all."

One day our friends were obliged to turn aside while a large caravan laden almost entirely with salt went past them. Salt is one of the principal commodities of African commerce so far as the interior is concerned; it is found in some districts, but not in others, and there is a constant movement of the article from the former to the latter. Bornoo has a very scanty supply of salt within its boundaries, and a great amount of this article is brought from Sokoto for the use of the inhabitants. Salt is obtained principally from salt springs, some of which

throw off a quantity of water of almost briny strength. This water is placed in large troughs; the heat of the sun dries away the liquid and leaves the salt in a solid mass. Just as the brine reaches the point of crystalization it is poured into moulds, in which the drying is completed; the salt thus being formed into cakes of suitable size for handling and transporting.

Caravans going from Morocco to Timbuctoo generally carry cargoes of salt, which is obtained from an oasis where there are extensive salt mines. In these mines the salt is found in layers about a foot thick and as clear as crystal. The layers are usually separated from one another and cut into blocks for transportation. These blocks of salt are exchanged for slaves when the caravan reaches Timbuctoo, and the ordinary price of a slave is the largest amount of salt he can stand upon and cover with his feet. Ned suggested, when he heard this, that it was probably on account of this mode of trading that the negro had large feet, and he asked Renaud if that view of the matter was correct. Renaud failed to see the point of the joke, and seriously answered that when the merchants of Timbuctoo were trading slaves for salt they selected those whose feet were the longest and widest.

The travelers crossed the boundary of Sokoto, and in a few days reached the city of Kano, which is the largest place that our friends had yet seen in the interior of Africa. Its population is variously estimated at from thirty to forty thousand. The doctor had sent in advance the letter which he received from the sheikh of Kukawa, and on reaching the walls of the city he found an officer

of the governor's staff waiting to receive him. The officer was mounted on a showy horse that pranced around very proudly, and evidently wanted to show how fast he could run. As for the officer, he was less attractive than the steed he bestrode; his dress consisted of a bournous, with a shirt under it, and a somewhat dilapidated turban. His weapon of authority, as well as of defence and offence, was a sword, which he carried under a strap over his saddle, a way in which the sword is frequently carried in this part of the world; his features showed him to be of Arab blood, but his skin was as dark as that of the negro, or very nearly so.

The officer received our friends with a great deal of dignity, and conducted them to a house inside the walls. Their baggage and merchandise were unloaded from the camels and placed in some rooms opening upon a courtyard; then the camels and all the horses not needed for immediate use were sent outside the city to a grove of palm trees, where a camp was formed and the animals were supplied with food. There was no good grazing ground within several miles of the city, and quite a business was carried on by the natives in supplying grass for the camels, horses, and other herbivorous animals; and the tents had not been pitched an hour before Renaud was importuned by several applicants for the contract to supply him with green food. He made what he considered an advantageous bargain, but found, in a few hours, that the enterprising contractor had taken advantage of his ignorance to demand and receive an exorbitant price. So he cancelled the engagement at once, and made another on far more favorable terms.

Dr. Whitney ascertained that it was the etiquette of Kano for him and his young companions to remain in their quarters until that high dignitary, the governor, should come to see them. Ned and Harry were somewhat cast down on receiving this information, as they were impatient to see the town. Knowing the easy ways of Africans and their disregard for time, they were fearful of being compelled to remain indoors for a day or more before the governor would be ready to receive them.

But while they were mourning over this state of affairs a messenger came to announce that the governor was on his way to call upon them. This put them into better humor, and also into better clothes; all three of the party hastily arrayed themselves in their Arab garments, selecting for the purpose the freshest of the contents of their wardrobe, and when the governor came they were ready to receive him, and also to regale him upon coffee, which was a great luxury in that part of the country. They had a somewhat tedious conversation with the governor, owing to the repeated translations through which their remarks were carried.

The governor welcomed them to Kano, and said that if he could serve them in any way he would be pleased to do so. He remained squatted on a divan at one side of the principal room for nearly half an hour, and then took his leave. During his visit our friends sat cross-legged on the same divan; they had practised that way of sitting for so long a time that they were now quite accustomed to it, but it was very far from being agreeable when they first undertook it.

An hour after the governor's departure our friends went to return his call; he had intimated through the interpreter that he would be at home at that time and ready to receive visitors. This hint was sufficient, and, once the governor was gone, they gathered up all the presents they intended for him, and in due time started for his palace. We will listen to Harry as he tells the story of the visit.

"We proceeded first," said the youth, "to the house of the 'kado,' or lord of the treasury, who had accompanied the governor on his call upon us. His house looked more like a farmyard than anything else, as it was a low building at one side of a large court that contained cattle, sheep, camels, and donkeys, not to mention a goodly number of chickens. I could not, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, call it clean; it was clean when compared with an ordinary barnyard, but not when regarded as the court of a gentleman's house. In fact, we could not find places for sitting down without soiling our garments, and so we remained standing as long as we were outside. We waited perhaps a quarter of an hour before we were taken into an inner room and offered places to sit on a divan. The kado received us civilly enough, though he did not offer any refreshments; he immediately set about examining our presents for the governor, and it was evident from his manner that he had the power of accepting or rejecting any or all of the presents we had brought. There was a large pocket-knife with many blades, a mirror with a very gaudy frame, a watch having a gold-filled case, a white bournous, and a white shirt.



"THE GOVERNOR DID NOT RISE TO RECEIVE US—"

His lordship was evidently fond of mirrors, as he took possession of the gaudily framed one for himself, and ordered the rest of the presents made into a bundle. As soon as the parcel was completed we started for the palace, followed by a servant who carried our gifts.

“The palace is a perfect labyrinth of courtyards, connected by inner passages, and with audience rooms and other apartments opening out from the sides. I did not count the number of courtyards that we passed through, but it seemed to me that there were some twelve or fifteen of them altogether. They were not by any means quiet spots, as each one contained dozens, and in some instances a hundred or more people, freemen and slaves of various importance, chatting and laughing together, some standing or walking about, others squatted on the ground, and a few lying asleep in the corners.

“After waiting a little while in one of the courtyards, we were taken to the audience hall of the governor, which was so poorly lighted that it required several minutes for our eyes to get accustomed to it. It was quite a large hall, and I think the largest we had seen in Africa; the ceiling was high and supported by arches that were quite ornamental. At one end of the hall there were two niches, or recesses; in one of these niches the governor was reclining on a divan on which a richly embroidered carpet was spread.

“The governor did not rise to receive us,—in fact, he hardly moved a muscle when we stood before him, while his lord of the treasury presented us and unfolded the presents we had brought. He seemed more interested in

the presents than in us, and gave a hint of what was probably lurking in his mind by asking us if we had any more goods of the same kind. We replied through our interpreter that we had selected our best things for him. To this answer he gave a nod of approval, asked a few questions about our travels and our reasons for coming to Kano, and then dismissed us with a wave of his hand.

“We were not particularly pleased with our reception, as the governor seemed to take no interest in our movements, and did not give us any information that would be of use to us; he did not appear to care where we went, and altogether seemed to desire to be rid of us. The doctor suggested that we would hear from him soon with a demand for more presents, and, sure enough, we had scarcely reached our quarters when the lord of the treasury came to us with the announcement that the governor desired a pistol of the kind that turns around and shoots several times. We had several revolvers among the things which we intended as presents to great dignitaries, and the doctor proceeded to bring one of them to light, carefully concealing the presence of the others. We sent this to the governor with a box containing one hundred cartridges for the weapon, but before going away the lord of the treasury said he would like a pistol for himself.

“Here was a dilemma; if we gave the lord of the treasury a revolver similar to that of the governor’s it would greatly cheapen the present in the eyes of the latter, and furthermore, it would bring the whole horde of officials down upon us with demands for similar presents. On the other hand, it would not do to offend this high

dignitary, as he was the intermediary between us and the governor, and might make serious trouble for us. The doctor hunted around to find another revolver, but of course hunted in the wrong places; with an expression of delight, he came upon a large clasp-knife containing four or five blades, a tiny saw, tweezers, scissors,— in fact, a whole kit of tools, most of them so small as to be of little practical use. With a great deal of ceremony, he presented this to his excellency who went away satisfied.

“ ‘We must get out of Kano as quickly as possible,’ said the doctor when the fellow had gone; ‘these chaps will beggar us in a very short time, and the more we give them the more they will demand.’

“ ‘Ned and I were thinking the same thing when the doctor spoke, and Ned asked if we could go away without the permission of the governor.

“ ‘There’s the trouble,’ said the doctor, ‘and it may be a serious one; etiquette requires that we should obtain the governor’s permission, and not only etiquette, but our safety. It would be very difficult for us to move with all our caravan without authority, and even if we did get away from the town, the governor, on hearing of it, could, and undoubtedly would, send after and bring us back. We would be liable to be plundered of everything we possess, and might get into prison for our temerity. We shall be obliged to stay here two or three days, at any rate, but I shall begin to make our plans for moving on immediately.’

“ ‘Renaud came to our house an hour or two later, and was told to keep the camels well fed and everything in

readiness for a speedy departure whenever the signal was given. We arranged our baggage so that it could be packed very quickly, and that very evening we sent to the camp such of it as we did not need with us, and had it placed under guard in Renaud's tent. We determined that whenever we obtained the authority to depart we would give the impression, without saying so distinctly, that we would not leave for a day or two, but at the same time would proceed to get away as quickly as possible.

“Early the next morning Ned and I started out to see the place, taking as guide a man who was thoroughly familiar with the ins and outs of Kano. We were on horseback, while our guide was on foot; he took us through all parts of the town, and we were quite surprised at its extent. The people were in all varieties of costume, from the gaudily dressed Arab down to the naked slave. In visiting an African town it is very necessary to be on horseback, as the traveler is often passing along the sides of walls and fences which a horseman can look over, but a pedestrian cannot. A great many scenes of domestic life are thus brought to the eye of the mounted traveler which totally escape the observation of the stranger on foot.

“Many of the houses of Kano are well built, and not a few are as substantial and extensive as the ordinary Moorish dwelling in the towns along the coast of the Mediterranean. The courtyards are generally spacious, and not infrequently include small gardens and grass plots. Most of the houses are of one story, with rooms opening upon a courtyard, and each has but a single

entrance from the street. Many of the courtyards have sheds like verandas immediately in front of the buildings, so that the inhabitants of the houses may lounge in open air, and at the same time be sheltered from the sun and rain. Judging by the number of good houses, there must be considerable wealth in the place. In the poorer parts of Kano the houses are small, and sometimes they are divided between two or more families, though this is not usually the case; people seem to prefer a very small dwelling entirely to themselves than to divide a much larger habitation with others. Ned thinks they are familiar with the old proverb, 'No house is large enough for two families.'

"We passed through a small market-place, but did not linger there, as we were told that there was a much larger one farther on. We continued our journey, and soon reached the great market, which covers a large square, and presented a very animated scene. There were rows of shops there, with goods of native and foreign productions, and a crowd of buyers and sellers who seemed to place no value upon time. Negotiations proceeded very slowly, but this is the case all through the country where we have traveled, and so we are not surprised at it.

"The market-place is divided into spaces for particular articles of trade, very much as the bazaars of Constantinople, Cairo, and other Moslem cities are arranged. One portion of the market-place is devoted to the necessities of life, such as corn, grain, vegetables, meat, and other articles. Not the least important is the place allotted to slaves, who were under a shed, some appearing robust

and well fed, others half starved, and all very scantily clad, or not clad at all.

“Another part of the place is devoted to cattle, horses, and camels, but the principal market for these animals is in another locality outside the walls. The scenes in the market-place were very animated, and we could have spent hours in their contemplation. Rich and poor were mingled together; the former in all the fashionable finery of the time and place, and the latter scantily dressed, and looking wistfully at the articles of food which they were unable to buy. We observed that blind people were numerous, and learned, on inquiry, that opthalmia was very prevalent among the people.

“The region around the market-place is said to be unhealthy, and it is no wonder that such is the case. Close by the market-place is the Jakara, a deep pond perhaps a thousand feet in length by three or four hundred in width; this pond receives all the drainage from the neighborhood, and all the offal from the slaughter-houses in that part of the market is thrown into it. Evidently the people of Kano have no knowledge of sanitary science, or they would readily understand, especially as the water from the Jakara is used for household purposes, why that region is as unhealthy as it is. There are two other ponds in the city, and they are nearly, but not quite as unhealthy as the one I've mentioned.

“Caravans came and went in the market-place, some of them from long distances, and bringing merchandise for sale at a large profit. Kano is a great place of trade, resembling in this respect Gadames, which we have here-

tofore described. The goods for sale in the market are in great variety, including products of the whole of northern Africa, and also of Europe and America. We saw iron-ware from Birmingham, cottons from Manchester, cutlery from Sheffield, knives and mirrors from Germany, and trinkets and gewgaws from France and Switzerland. America was less extensively represented than England or the countries of the continent. There were cotton cloths from American mills, but not in great number, and there were knives, hatchets, and other tools and implements from Connecticut and Massachusetts. Fortunately for the people, they have not yet become extensive users of ardent spirits, either from America or any European country. As the rulers of the land are Mohammedans, they show no inclination to favor the demoralizing trade, and hence the slight demand for that article of infamous traffic which is so abundant on the coast.

“I am reminded in this connection, though it has nothing to do with Kano, that when European trade was opened up on the Niger by the English it speedily fell into the hands of the Brazilians who came there to buy slaves, the slave trade then being active in Brazil. Cargoes of American goods from New York, Boston, and Philadelphia were sent directly to the ports at the mouth of the Niger, where they were delivered over to the Brazilian agents stationed there. These cargoes consisted of rum, cotton cloths, and the cheapest kind of knives, pistols, axes, hatchets, looking-glasses, beads, and other trade goods of which the African is fond. They were shipped up the river and used in the purchase

of slaves ; as there were no merchants but the Brazilians who would take slaves in payment for goods, they had the monopoly of business, and the English were practically driven from the market. When the slave trade was abolished in Brazil there was no market for the principal product of Africa, and consequently other nations were able to compete with America in the trade of the Niger. When this state of affairs came about the demand for American goods ceased, and England and France obtained possession of the market.

CHAPTER XVIII.

KANO AND SOKOTO — TIMBUCTOO.

“KANO is not only a place of trade,” continued Harry, “but also a place of manufacture. Cotton is produced in this part of Africa, and the people of Kano display considerable skill in spinning, weaving, and dyeing it. The dyer’s trade is an important one; we passed several houses where the women were spinning cotton, or weaving the thread into cloth, and we also passed dyeing establishments, where men were mixing the indigo and other coloring matters; others were taking articles from the dye pots and hanging them up to dry, and others were forming the goods into packages for sending away. Most of the cloth is made into shirts or bournouses. The colors are by no means uniform, and the best of the articles are considerably variegated.

“Some of the cotton is woven with a certain proportion of silk, and it bears different names, according to the quantity of silk contained in it. Of late years the silk industry has increased considerably; the silk is the product of the country, and great improvements have been made in the rearing of the silkworm. In silks and cottons we saw several varieties of plaids, some white and black checkered, some of white, black, and red, others with large squares, and some with small ones. Taken

altogether, as far as we could learn, there must be at least fifty different varieties of cotton and silk goods. They are sent in all directions by caravans,—to the north as far as Mourzouk, and sometimes to Tripoli; to the west, not only to Timbuctoo, but even to the shores of the Atlantic; to the east all over Bornoo, as far as the Nile; and to the south beyond the Niger and the Benoue. In fact, it may be said that the limit of the demand for the cloths of Kano, so far as the south is concerned, is the limit of the region where people wear any kind of clothing.

“The few travelers who have visited Timbuctoo speak of the fine quality of the cotton cloths made in that town; the fact is, as we afterward learned, that nearly all the cotton sold in Timbuctoo comes from Kano, and it is estimated that the exports to that city alone amount to no less than three hundred camel loads every year.

“In addition to cloths, Kano produces sandals and leather goods in general. Sheepskins are dyed here, the principal color being red, and they are exported in large quantities. The Kanoese make boxes from the kola-nut, and show great ingenuity in carving them; then there is a large trade in natron, or soda, and also in salt, the latter article being imported for consumption in the provinces. They formerly imported great quantities of woolen cloth of a very poor quality, nearly all of it dyed red, but this has gone out of fashion, and the importations of it at present are very light. We saw quite a quantity of the old-fashioned sugar loaves in the market, and were told that in some places they were used as currency. The people prefer small loaves to large ones, and some that we saw

did not weigh over two pounds each. A little ivory, but not a great deal, is exported. There is some gold-dust which finds its way out of Kano, but there is no gold coin in circulation. Silver dollars and cowrie shells are the currency of the place, the dollars being the Maria Theresa coins, and also the Spanish dollar. The former is preferred, not because it is any better, but because the people dislike the two pillars on the coin of Spain on account of their resemblance to cannon.

“I don’t know but that I’ve said more than you care to read about the commerce and manufactures of this city; if so, please excuse me, and skip what you don’t want to know about. The subject is interesting to us, and consequently I thought that you might like to hear about it.

“When we got back to our quarters we were told that the governor was coming to return our call, and of course we knew that he would be pretty sure to intimate a want of some kind or other. He came in the afternoon with his lord of the treasury and a whole lot of followers of high and low degree. He squatted on the carpeted divan which we had prepared for him, and partook of the coffee that we offered. His attendants crowded into the room until they filled it completely; there seemed to be no order or regularity about their movements, and as for ceremony, the whole visit was decidedly uncereemonious. Sure enough, the governor did as we had expected; he intimated that he would like to look at our collection of presents, as there might be something that he would wish to have. So we opened the few packages we had in sight; it was a lucky circumstance that we sent our super-

fluous belongings to Renaud's tent, as already mentioned, and as the goods were sent there after dark, when all the people were in their houses, nobody seemed to have discovered the transfer, or, at any rate, the news had not reached the governor.

“The goods that we displayed were of no great consequence, and the governor was convinced that he had really obtained the pick of the lot, as he assumed a satisfied air, and only took two or three handkerchiefs, a clasp-knife, and a small bell, one of those operated by a coiled spring set in motion by touching a knob on the top. During the rest of his visit, after he obtained possession of the bell, he tinkled it every few minutes, to the great delight of himself and all his attendants. I fancy that he stayed awake for a few nights, just for the fun of ringing that bell and summoning his attendants.

“We took advantage of his good nature, while playing with the bell, to suggest that we wanted to move on. He did not give an immediate answer, but cast another glance at our store of goods, and then assented. We felt like smiling all around at the readiness with which he allowed us to go, but were careful not to make known our feelings. Of course, his followers wanted presents, but we managed to put them off with handkerchiefs, scarfs, cheap pocket-knives, a few Birmingham razors, and some other articles of no great cost.

“The governor remained with us about half an hour, and then rose to go. We did not interfere with his departure, and were decidedly glad when he and his followers were out of sight. We were uncertain whether he would

send an escort to accompany us a short distance on our way, but earnestly hoped he would do nothing of the kind. We had his permission to leave and that was all we wanted.

“A little before sunset we received from the governor a steaming dish of kouskousou as a farewell gift. The doctor suggested that before we sat down to eat it we would do well to follow the custom of actors and theatrical managers in America when they are introducing a new play, — that is, ‘try it on a dog.’

“‘Why so?’ I exclaimed.

“‘Well,’ replied the doctor, ‘the governor has acted so uncivilly towards us that it is just possible he might end our acquaintance by poison. Poison is a very effective weapon in this country, and is frequently used to get rid of disagreeable or inconvenient personages.’

“There were two or three dogs hanging about our courtyard, and they did not seem to belong to anybody, or be well fed; we took about a quart of the kouskousou and poured it on the ground in sight of one of these animals. Needless to say that when we stepped back a little he approached, and, to apply the slang phrase, ‘got outside of it’ very quickly. We watched him for quite awhile, and, as far as we could see, he suffered no inconvenience from the food, so we concluded that we had misjudged the governor, and wrongly suspected him. We made a mental apology to him, and proceeded to give the kouskousou to our servants. Renaud came to get his orders for the next day, and he got them very quickly; these were to transfer all our remaining baggage to camp,

and get everything in readiness for an early start. We also told him that we would remain in our quarters during the night and meet him early the next morning at the camp.

“When we got to camp we found that everything was in readiness for moving on. One of the camel drivers was missing and another was sent to hunt him up. We were afraid that this circumstance would delay us, and so it did, but only for a half hour. The missing driver turned up along with the one we sent to search for him. Then we filed out of the camp, and were soon on the way to the southwest.”

In view of his experience with the governor of Kano, Dr. Whitney determined that he would give Sokoto a wide berth, and follow a road which would not bring him near that place. He naturally concluded that the sultan would be quite as rapacious as his subordinate, the governor, and probably more so, and a visit to the capital would be likely to result in his being stripped of the greater part of his valuables, either by a demand for numerous presents or by downright robbery. Consequently he took a line of march that would carry him well away from the place he dreaded so much.

The route which the caravan followed took them first through a fairly productive and well-peopled country, and then it brought them to the southern edge of the Great Sahara. On the borders of the desert they encountered their old friends, or enemies, the Tuaregs, whose range extends southward to the limit of the desert, and in some places beyond it. The doctor still retained the safe-conduct which he obtained from the Tuareg chiefs in the

early part of his travels. He hardly expected that it would be of any use so far from the point where it was given, and that he would be obliged to buy over again the right to travel through the Tuareg country. But, to his surprise and delight, the safe-conduct was acknowledged to be in full force, and he was told that he could travel without interference wherever he chose. A hint was given, however, that a few presents would be acceptable, and these he proceeded to give without hesitation.

The Tuaregs follow the same system of plundering in this part of the desert as they do in the regions farther north. They make raids upon the negro villages, driving away cattle, sheep, and horses, and helping themselves generally to what they want. Many of the towns and villages obtain immunity from these raids by paying blackmail regularly. The tax is a heavy one upon them, but their only alternative is, in default of payment, to submit to whatever the Tuaregs choose to do.

Our friends caused it to be given out that they were under the protection of the Tuaregs, and by making this fact known they escaped annoyances which otherwise might have been their lot. By keeping constantly in the edge of the region over which the Tuaregs held sway they were safe from encounters with the local sheikhs of the negro districts, and consequently were under no necessity for dealing out presents right and left as they went along. Occasionally they met caravans traveling toward the southward, and some of them of considerable size; in several instances they exchanged guides with these caravans to the mutual advantage of both parties.

In one region which was considered dangerous Dr. Whitney engaged a Tuareg sheikh and his men to accompany the caravan for several days. At the end of the stipulated time the sheikh was so well pleased with his companions that he offered to continue the journey, for a small compensation, as far as Timbuctoo. The doctor gladly consented to pay the price demanded, and in due time arrived in front of that famous city,—the most famous, in some respects, of all the interior cities of Africa.

We will listen to Ned as he tells of the experiences of the party in their visit to Timbuctoo.

“We halted on a high ridge six or eight miles from the city,” said the youth in his journal, “and sent forth a messenger to announce our coming. From the point where we were Timbuctoo presented quite an imposing appearance. The ground on which it stands is a very slight hill, rising in a gentle slope on all sides towards the center. In the center is a tower, or minaret, rising above the tops of the surrounding buildings, and reminding Harry and myself of the dome of the State House as it rises above Boston. The city is partially surrounded by walls built of clay, but they are very weak, though they might resist for a little while the attacks of horsemen or infantry not provided with implements for digging and quarrying. A battery of artillery would not want a great deal of time to make a hole in the wall; neither would a party of workmen armed with picks and shovels. There are many houses and huts outside the walls, and it is in these dwellings that caravans and single travelers are usually lodged.

“It was difficult for us to realize that we were actually in sight of Timbuctoo, a city which has always treated the foreigner with a great deal of jealousy, rarely allowing him to set foot within its boundaries, and on more than one occasion murdering him in punishment for his temerity in coming there. A year or two ago a small force of French soldiers reached Timbuctoo and took possession of it, but the period of their occupation was brief. They were assaulted, defeated, and driven away, with the loss of their commander, and some other officers, and a considerable number of men. The inhabitants and authorities of the city made common cause with their usually hostile neighbors, and united peaceably with them to expel the invader. Quite likely the French will come again, and in larger numbers, but for the present Timbuctoo retains the independence which it has possessed for a long time.

“When we had sufficiently rested we moved on towards Timbuctoo. About three miles from the city we met the governor's brother with an escort, and he announced through an interpreter that he was sent to accompany us to our destination. He added that before going further he must receive some presents, and also must know what presents we intended for the governor. We excused ourselves from making any presents then and there, for the reason that all our baggage was securely packed on the backs of the camels, and it would be exceedingly inconvenient to stop where we were and unpack it. He admitted the force of this reasoning and said we could go on, but the presents must be brought out as soon as the loads were removed from the camels' backs.

“This was not a very good beginning, and we foresaw no amount of trouble in our intercourse with the governor and his officials.

“Our caravan came to a halt among the buildings outside the town, and the governor’s brother indicated to us the house that would be our dwelling-place during our stay. He told us that we were not to attempt to enter the city without the governor’s permission, or that of himself. He was the representative of the governor with all caravans and travelers; he intimated to us that if he was properly treated we should have no trouble, but if, on the other hand, we were not liberal with presents, he could and would make trouble for us. This fellow stayed with us until the baggage was unloaded from the camels, and then he renewed his demands for presents. We gave him a bournous of the best quality, a caftan, or jacket, and a silk shirt, together with a few small articles, and thought he would be satisfied.

“‘That doesn’t begin to be enough,’ said the official blackmailer. ‘I want another bournous, two more silk shirts, a rifle with five hundred pounds of ammunition, and a many-shooting pistol (revolver).’

“‘You had better take all we have and an order on New York for twice as much,’ said Harry, in an undertone. Then he added, ‘We can’t stay long around Timbuctoo; it is a luxury which only the affluent can afford.’

“Dr. Whitney said that he didn’t intend to give the man what he demanded, but it was judicious to compromise with him, as his ill-will would be a serious matter. He told the interpreter to say that we were unable to get

at the packages containing all our goods, but when the governor should visit us he would doubtless find everything satisfactory. We made him understand very clearly that we could do nothing more until we saw the governor, and after some persuasion the man went away, promising that the governor would come to see us on the morrow.

“We were forbidden to go out of our house until we had seen the governor, and, in order to get the air and see as much as possible, we went up to the terrace of the building, which afforded an excellent view of the northern part of the city. The most prominent object in our range of vision was the mosque of Sankoray, the largest in the city. It stands on the site of an ancient mosque, and has recently been restored to all its original glory. Previous to its restoration, it had greatly fallen into ruins. There are several other mosques in Timbuctoo; one of them is called The Great Mosque, although it is not as extensive as the one just mentioned.

“Most of the houses visible from our roof were of a single story only, though there was a goodly number of two-storied buildings. Huts of matting and of grass were scattered among the buildings in open squares or on otherwise vacant lots, and the number of them was sufficient to give the impression that Timbuctoo was by no means crowded. The streets are narrow and closely shut in by the buildings, and from our position on the roof of our house we could see very little of the streets or what was going on in them. We found the terrace in a very dirty condition, and set our servants to cleaning it at once; in

fact, the whole house was in such a state as to reflect no credit upon the previous tenants.

“In addition to being very dirty, it was infested by ants of several varieties, including the white ant which makes such terrible havoc with all articles of wool or leather. We hung some woollen garments against the wall, and the next morning found them perforated with holes which the ants had eaten. One day the doctor put on a woollen bournous and sat down on the floor in the corner of one of our rooms. He sat there for half an hour or more finishing a sketch, and in that brief time the ants had eaten a hole in his garment at least half an inch in diameter. If I ever select a place for a permanent residence it will not be in the suburbs of Timbuctoo.

“The people of the place are very hostile to Christians, and some of them are absolutely fanatical on the point of allowing Christians within their boundaries. We were told that if we ventured inside the city we were in danger of being killed by these fanatics; we wanted very much to see the city, but did not desire the sight of it enough to give our lives in exchange for it. When the governor came to see us, as he did on the day promised, we asked permission to enter the city, and desired to be informed if there was any danger in our going there. With an eye to business, he answered that the excursion was full of danger, but he would send an escort which would make us entirely safe.

“An escort is a very good thing in its way, and there is no doubt that it has saved the lives of many travelers, but with an escort a traveler can't see one quarter as much as

he can if he goes alone. The leader of the escort takes you to a few principal places, and that is all; whenever you halt, and sometimes when in motion, you are surrounded by a crowd and your range of vision is obstructed. We were obliged to accept the escort, and politely thanked the governor for the favor of that incumbrance and protection.

“Evidently the governor and his brother were real brothers and no mistake, as the former was just as rapacious in his fondness for presents as the latter was. We duplicated to the governor the presents which we had already given to his next of kin, but he was by no means satisfied. We added more and more to the allotment, and the governor sat there as still as a log of wood. I’ve no doubt that he would have taken everything we had, including our camels and horses, and still would have sat there in open-mouthed cupidity, never raising face or hand to indicate that he was satisfied. We were determined not to beggar ourselves, and when the doctor thought we had given enough he cut off the source of supplies with very little ceremony. Of course the governor’s followers came in for a share, including the brother who met us on the road the day before.

“We now had permission to go freely about the suburbs, and might enter the city under the guidance of an escort. We proceeded to do both things that very day.

“Our Tuareg friends circulated the story that we were Moslems from Stamboul (Constantinople), and as it was to our interest to have this story believed we did not attempt to contradict the beautiful piece of fiction. Dr. Whitney

had a letter which was written in Turkish by the dragoon in the American consulate at the capital of Turkey, and commending us to 'The Faithful' everywhere. We had shown this letter on several occasions and it had been of good effect; we tried it again at Timbuctoo and found it very useful, as it inspired a wholesome respect for us on the part of the governor, and also upon the chief of the escort which came to take us into the city.

"The letter, in reality, amounted to nothing, but with the Arab tendency to imagination it was counted for a great deal. According to our Tuareg friends, we three modest travelers were men of immense consequence at Stamboul, and only a little below the great sultan. It is my belief that the awe which this letter inspired had much to do with our safety at Timbuctoo.

"We were a good deal disappointed in our first visit inside the city. As before stated, the streets are very narrow, probably in order to keep out the sun, which at times is very hot. The buildings reminded us of those of Kano, as they are constructed on the same general plan. Some of the courtyards are open to the street, and are visible from it, but as a general thing they are closed by a sort of wicker gate, so that the pedestrian or equestrian can see little, if anything, of what is going on inside. The market-place is a large, open square, not so large as that of Kano, nor is it as densely crowded with people. It must be remembered that Kano contains about forty thousand inhabitants, while Timbuctoo has less than half that number. The exact population nobody knows; we asked several of the most intelligent officials that we came

across, and they always answered that they didn't know. When pressed for an estimate, some of them placed it as low as twelve thousand, and none exceeded twenty thousand. Taking the average of all these guesses as the actual population, we may fairly put it at sixteen thousand.

“The market-place contains more European goods than that of Kano, but fewer articles of native manufacture. It must be borne in mind that Kano is a place of both trade and manufacture, while Timbuctoo is a place of trade alone, there being no manufactures worth mentioning. The general style of goods on sale in the market is very much like that of Kano, as the market is frequented by the same kind of people. There is a greater demand for English cottons, particularly calicoes, than there is at Kano, and the colors of the prints on exhibition are as gaudy as human taste can make them. The African is very fond of gaudy colors, and the more of them that can be crowded into a single square yard of cloth, the better is he suited.

“We wanted to visit the mosques, and we wanted to do so all the more because we knew we couldn't. The most that was permitted was to walk or ride past them; if we had attempted to enter the doorways, I can't say what would have happened. Notwithstanding the falsehoods told in our behalf by the Tuaregs and others that we were faithful Moslems from Stamboul, a good many people had a suspicion that we were Christians, and, having this belief they would naturally object to our entering their mosques; even our escort could not have been relied on in such an emergency, and we might have found ourselves cut down

by the swords of the very men who were sent to protect us.

“Most of the streets of Timbuctoo are regularly laid out, but in some parts they run with the eccentricity of cow paths in a pasture. The buildings seem to have been dropped down higgledy-piggledy wherever they happened to fall. This is the case more especially with the huts and shanties of the poor people than with the better class of dwellings.

“Both within and without the city we saw a good many caravans. The caravans and the people accompanying them are required to make their stopping places outside the place, just as we were compelled to do, and they only go inside to deliver and receive their cargoes, returning immediately when their work in this line is over. The caravans bring from the north European goods of various kinds,—firearms, tobacco, paper, trinkets, and the like,—to offer for sale. These things are exchanged for slaves, ivory, gold-dust, palm oil, and gums. Northwardly the trade extends to Morocco, Algeria, and Tripoli, eastward to the Nile, south to the Soudan, and westward to Guinea and Senegambia. The trade isn’t as extensive as that of Kano, and, as before stated, the variety of goods is not as great.”

CHAPTER XIX.

DOWN THE NIGER — MUNGO PARK AND THE LANDER
BROTHERS — THE END.

ONE morning, while our young friends were at breakfast, Ned remarked that he had heard or read that there was no rhyme for Timbuctoo, to which Harry replied that somebody had made one for it, and he believed that it was as follows : —

“ If I were a cassowary,
On the sands of Timbuctoo,
I'd eat a missionary,
Eat him bones and hymn-book, too.”

“ I don't see anything the matter with that rhyme,” said Ned, as Harry paused, “ and it seems to me there ought to be other rhymes for that word.”

“ I have seen another somewhere,” remarked the doctor, “ and I think it ran this way : —

“ ‘ Jim and I went to the races,
By the coach from Timbuctoo ;
When we went to book our places,
I booked one, and Jim booked two.’ ”

“ That recalls to me,” said Harry, “ another rhyme which I heard of. It was made in the office of the British

Legation at Washington, so the story goes, where there were two clerks named Buck, one of them very slender in figure and the other inclined to corpulency. One day this question of rhyme came up, and one of the brothers said he could make a new one. This is what he produced:—

“‘Of late there’s been much disputation
About a rhyme for Timbuctoo;
But here we have in this legation
Stout Buck and slim Buck, too.’”

“I think,” said Ned, “that if we keep on we may find a whole volume of rhymes for the name of this inhospitable city, and speaking of rhymes calls to my mind a story that I read some time ago about a British lord who offered a prize of fifty pounds to any one who could make one with the word ‘porringer.’ He was so confident that none could be made with that word that he was willing to back his opinion with money.”

“Did any one succeed in winning it?” queried Harry.

“Yes,” was the reply; “in a very few days after the offer was made public his lordship received the following:—

“The Duke of York a daughter had,
And gave the Prince of Orange her,
And now, my lord, I claim the prize
For making rhyme with porringer.”

“He deserved the reward,” said Harry, “and I hope he received it.”

“ I presume he did,” said Ned, “ but the story, as I read it, was silent on that point.”

From the very hour of the arrival of our friends at Timbuctoo Dr. Whitney was busy with his plans for getting away from it. He wanted to continue westward, following the valley of the Niger to its head waters, then crossing the mountains, entering Senegambia, and ultimately reaching the French possessions on the west coast of Africa, in the valley of the Senegal River. The route offered a great amount of difficulties and dangers, the natives being hostile, and so much so that there was a likelihood that the whole party would be murdered. Then there was the desert route to Morocco, but there was nothing of great interest along the way, and the journey would be fearfully monotonous. There was also the desert route by way of Touat and Algeria, but this had the same disadvantages as the others, with the additional objection of causing them to traverse a considerable part of a route which they had traveled before.

A more attractive and less dangerous route was that by way of the Niger, as they could float on its waters all the way to the ocean, except at a few points where it would be necessary for the boats to run the rapids or be dragged around them. After careful deliberation on the subject, the doctor decided that they would take the river route.

With some difficulty and the expenditure of presents, both in money and goods, permission to depart was obtained. The doctor engaged an Arab sheikh, named Abd-el-Ali, who was familiar with the river, and who had

authority enough to be respected by the natives along the great stream as far as the junction of the Niger with the Benoue. Timbuctoo isn't on the river itself, but six miles away from it. Its port is Kabara, where there is quite a town, having considerable commerce. Merchandise coming either up or down the river and intended for Timbuctoo is landed at Kabara and carried thence on camels or other pack animals to the city. There is quite a fleet of boats at Kabara at all times of the year, and there's no difficulty in buying or hiring them for a voyage.

As soon as Dr. Whitney obtained permission to leave he sent Abd-el-Ali to Kabara to buy or hire the necessary boats, and the doctor followed with his caravan. At Kabara he sold all his animals, except two camels and two horses, and sold them at a good price, as it happened that a caravan was just fitting out for Lake Chad, and animals were in demand.

All the employes of the expedition, with the exception of Renaud, Yusef, and Abdullah, one camel driver, and the Arab interpreter, were paid off and discharged. Three boats were engaged, each of them about twenty-five feet in length, and having four men to manage it. Another and larger boat of the kind used for ferrying purposes was obtained, and in this the camels and horses were placed. It was a difficult matter to induce the animals to step on board, and they were only embarked with a great deal of noise and pushing on the part of the boatmen. Their favorite way of inducing a refractory animal to go on board was by passing a rope around his hind quarters and attaching a dozen negroes to it at each end; then

while two negroes pulled at his head, others cudgelled and shouted at him from behind, while the men at the rope pulled away with all their might. Under the circumstances the poor beast had no other alternative but to do as his tormentors desired.

The baggage was loaded in the other boats, and then the party pushed off from shore. The boat which carried our three friends took the lead and the others followed closely, the one with the animals bringing up the rear. In this order the aquatic procession left the bend of the river where Kabara stands, and pushed out into the current of the Niger.

Ned and Harry greatly enjoyed this mode of traveling, there being no mounting or dismounting into or from the saddle, no creeping over the hot sands, nor any of the other inconveniences of land travel. The center of each of their boats, with the exception of the "menagerie," as they called the one that carried the animals, was roofed over, so that the travelers could, if they wished, sit comfortably in the shade. The current bore them steadily along, and the rowers had little to do, except to keep the boat in its proper course. They found that the river below Kabara was full of islands, and realized the foresight of Dr. Whitney in engaging some one who was familiar with the course of the stream and able to indicate the route. No doubt, the boatmen were sufficiently good pilots for all practical purposes, but it was desirable to have some one in control, and Abd-el-Ali was just the man they wanted.

It was early in the afternoon when the party left Kabara,

and, consequently, they did not make much progress during the first day. The sheikh selected a landing-place on an island which had no inhabitants, deeming it safer there than on the bank of the river. The ferry-boat was brought up to the land, so that the animals could step ashore without difficulty, and they made no opposition to setting foot on terra firma. The grass was thick and sweet on the island, and it is hardly necessary to say that camels and horses were well fed that night and the next morning. By means of ropes they were picketed so that they could graze over a considerable area, and not one of them showed the least inclination to miss his opportunity.

It is safe to say that the quadrupeds had a more agreeable stay on the island than the bipeds, as the latter were greatly annoyed by mosquitoes. Fortunately, our friends were provided with mosquito nets and were able in part to defend themselves, and thus diminish the annoyance. They couldn't do away with it altogether, as the insects were of assorted sizes, and the smallest of them could get through the meshes of the nets with the utmost ease, and Ned said he wouldn't be surprised to hear of their getting through the side of a tin trunk. The natives made smudges of grass, reeds, and underbrush, and, furthermore, they were accustomed to living among the mosquitoes and didn't specially mind them. The presence of these pests, however, had the effect of getting everybody out of bed early in the morning, and in this respect they were decidedly useful.

Before leaving Kabara, Ned and Harry indulged in expectations of the fun they would have in bathing in the

river night and morning, but they changed their views very materially in the afternoon of the first day and did not attempt to bathe in the stream. They ascertained that the river abounded in crocodiles, and these creatures are always discouraging to bathers. River horses, or hippopotami, were also abundant, and occasionally came to the surface to look wonderingly at the boats, and sometimes acted as though they intended an attack. The snouts of the crocodiles were frequently visible, and there was no doubt in the minds of our young friends that these ugly-looking saurins would be very glad to take them in. So their nearest approach to a river bath was to stand near the edge of the bank and have servants throw buckets of water over them.

Soon after starting out in the morning the Niger narrowed down to a single road stream, leaving the maze of islands behind. The current, which had been sluggish at first, now increased to a good three miles an hour. The rowers, under the guidance of their pilot, kept the boats where the stream was strongest, which was just enough to give the flotilla steerage way. It was a delightful mode of travel compared with that of the desert on the back of a camel or horse.

About noon the boats came to a place where the main channel swept close to the southern bank, so as to bring them within twenty yards of the land. In this bend of the river there was a large village, and a group of about fifty natives, armed with spears, bows and arrows, and a few muskets, came to the water's edge and demanded that the party should stop and pay tribute. The doctor re-

ferred the question to Abd-el-Ali, who said there was no occasion for anything of the kind, as the river did not belong to the natives on the banks, but was free to everybody. He told the boatmen to keep on, and they obeyed his orders. The natives fired upon them with their muskets, but the bullets went wide of their mark. Ned said they must have been poor marksmen, as they couldn't even hit one of the camels which was standing up in the menagerie, and a man who couldn't hit a camel at that distance must be the poorest kind of a shot.

The doctor and his young companions were ready with their rifles, but they withheld their fire, not wishing to injure anybody unless they were first injured themselves.

"Quite likely," said the doctor, "we may have to do some shooting to defend ourselves before we get through with this part of our journey. It was somewhere in this part of the Niger that Mungo Park lost his life after several fights with the natives."

"I remember reading about it," said Ned. "He came over the mountains from Senegambia in May, 1805, with thirty-eight men, intending to descend the Niger in boats to its mouth. I think that the account I read said that he perished by drowning."

"Quite likely it did," said the doctor; "but there has always been an uncertainty as to the manner of his death, for the reason that the explorer and all his men perished, and the story of their death was told by their assailants. At the time of Park's death he was having a fight with people on shore, and one account says that his boat was overturned in a rapid while the fight was going on. Park

and two of his men were drowned while attempting to reach the shore, and the rest were killed."

"I presume," said Harry, "that the natives had no fire-arms at that time, as they have at present."

"No," was the reply. "At least, there has been no mention of any. In these modern days traders have brought cheap muskets into most parts of Africa, and every native who can afford it is armed with one of them. Fortunately for us, these weapons are very cheaply made, and are almost as dangerous to the one who handles them as to those at whom they are discharged. Their range is quite short, and they can't be aimed at all accurately. Our breech-loading and magazine rifles can shoot several times as far, and with much greater accuracy. A small party of white men with modern rifles can successfully resist a large party of blacks equipped with Birmingham muskets."

As the party floated along the river after passing the hostile village, Dr. Whitney asked Harry what he could tell him about the great river on which they were traveling.

"I can't tell a great deal," was the reply, "and will repeat what I learned from my geography:—

"The river is called the Nîger in most of the school books and on maps; it is also called the Quorra (which means river), and the word has several different spellings. In the upper part of its course it is called Joliba, and it rises in the country of the Mandingos, north of the Kong Mountains. In the first part of its course it flows east and northeast towards the desert, then it flows southeast, and afterwards south, and enters the sea in the Gulf of Benin.

Like the Nile, Ganges, and other great rivers, it has several mouths which enclose a large delta. It receives many rivers in its course, the principal one being the Benoue, which comes in from the eastward. It is navigable for steamboats up to its junction with the Benoue, and both rivers are navigable for a hundred miles or more beyond the point of junction. It is interrupted by rapids at several places, but can boast of no great cataract anywhere along its course."

"A very good description for a brief one," said the doctor in a commendatory tone. "And now I'll ask a question of Ned."

"Very well, sir," replied that youth, with a smile, "I will answer it to the best of my ability."

"No more could be asked," was the reply. "What can you tell me of the exploration of the Niger and the discovery of its source?"

"The exploration of the Niger," said Ned, "was first undertaken by the British African Association, which was founded in 1788, under the auspices of Sir Joseph Banks, and one of the first enterprises the association undertook was the exploration of the Niger. Several men were sent out at different times, but the one who accomplished most in these early days was the famous Englishman, Mungo Park, whom we have just been talking about. He sailed from England in 1795 on his first expedition, reached the head waters of that river, and descended a part of it, but, owing to the many obstacles in his way, he was unable to go all the way to its mouth. The story of his adventures is very interesting."

“Yes, it is, indeed,” said Harry, “and some parts of it are very pathetic.”

“Can you tell us about some of them?” queried the doctor.

“I think I can,” was the reply. “One thing I remember is that he says that in the most of the regions where he traveled the people had never seen a white man, and they pitied him greatly because he had lost his color. He tells how he would have remained all night without food and shelter on one occasion, but for the kindness of an old woman who gave him lodging in her hut. While he was eating the food which she had set before him several young girls watched him and chanted the following:—

“ ‘The winds roared and the rain fell ;
The poor white man, faint and weary, came and sat
under our tree.
He has no mother to bring him milk,
No wife to bring him corn.

CHORUS.

“ ‘Let us pity the white man ;
He has no mother to bring him milk,
No wife to bring him corn.’ ”

“On his return to the coast he followed a different route from the one he took in his advance. In one place between Kooma and Sibidooloo he was attacked by Arabs, who robbed him of everything he possessed, even to the greater portion of his clothing. His account of the robbery and what followed it is very beautifully told in his own

words. It impressed me so much when I read it that I read it over and over again, and I believe I could repeat it literally."

"By all means let us have it," said the doctor.

"Well," replied the youth, "here it is:—

"After the robbers were gone, I sat for some time looking around me in amazement and terror. Whichever way I turned nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. All these circumstances crowded at once on my recollection, and I confess that my spirits began to fail me. I considered my fate as certain, and that I had no alternative but to lie down and perish.

"At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation. Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which looks of so small importance look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after His own image? Surely not. Reflections like these would not allow me to despair. I started up, and, disregarding both hunger and fatigue, traveled forward, assured that relief was at hand; and I was not disappointed. In a short time I came to a small village, at the entrance of which I overtook the two shep-

herds who had come with me from Kooma. They were much surprised to see me; for they said they never doubted that the Foolahs, when they had robbed, had murdered me.'

"Park's second journey was the one in which he lost his life. As you already know, he started down the river, having lost thirty-one men out of thirty-eight, and the remaining seven were also ill. He had several battles with the natives, and at the last one Park and two of his men were drowned and the remaining five were killed."

As Harry paused after this narration, Ned resumed his story.

"The next expedition after Mungo Park was that of Oudney, Clapperton, and Denham, who started from Tripoli in March, 1822. They had a great deal of difficulty in getting an escort from Mourzouk, but they finally obtained one, an Arab by the name of Boo-Khaloom, who was a merchant, and also a sort of soldier in the service of the sultan of Mourzouk. His principal trading was in slaves, and it made no difference to him whether he bought them or stole them,—in fact, he rather preferred the latter method on account of its being cheaper. Soon after leaving Mourzouk the party arrived at some wells, and found the ground all around there covered with human skeletons. Boo-Khaloom explained that they were a party of slaves that started to cross the desert with an insufficient supply of food and water. They had been left to die there, chained by the neck and feet, after having been driven across the hot desert.

"The party reached Kukawa, and from that point Den-

ham accompanied Boo-Khaloom on one of his slave stealing expeditions. The expedition was a failure, and was badly defeated and broken up. Boo-Khaloom and most of his men were killed, and Denham narrowly escaped with his life. His companions were butchered within a few yards of him, and Denham himself was stripped of his clothing, but managed to escape by diving under a horse and running as fast as he could towards a mountain stream, where he thought he could take refuge. Here is what he says about crossing the stream :—

“My strength had almost left me, and I seized the young branches issuing from a large stump which overhung the ravine, for the purpose of letting myself down into the water, for the sides were precipitous, when, under my hand, as the branch yielded to the weight of my body, a large liffa, the worst kind of serpent this country produces, rose from its coil as if in the very act of striking. I was horror-struck and deprived for the moment of all recollection; the branch slipped from my hand, and I tumbled headlong into the water beneath; this shock, however, revived me, and with three strokes of my arms I reached the opposite bank, which, with difficulty, I crawled up; and then, for the first time, felt myself safe from my pursuers.’

“Denham managed to get away and join some of the people who had escaped death or capture. He rode nearly fifty miles without clothes, on the bare back of a lean horse, and finally reached Kukawa, where he was confined for several weeks with a severe illness. The sheikh of Kukawa treated him very kindly, and when

Denham got well again he accompanied another slave-stealing expedition, which was more successful. He visited some small tribes and kingdoms, and returned once more to Kukawa, where he met his friend, Clapperton, who had been making explorations to the south and west. Dr. Oudney, the other member of the party, had died some months before. Denham and Clapperton returned to England, and the latter made another expedition to Africa some years afterward. He had visited Sokoto on his first expedition, and had been kindly treated by the sultan. On his second expedition he went again to Sokoto, and found the sultan very unfriendly. The traveler was detained for a year, being kept in prison all the time; in fact, he died there in 1827.

“At the time of Clapperton’s death he had with him as confidential servant a young Englishman, named Richard Lander. After witnessing the death and burial of his master, Lander returned with Clapperton’s papers to England, where he arrived in 1828. Accompanied by his brother John, he sailed from England in January, 1830, traveled through Fezzan and Mourzouk, and reached the Niger at Yauri, whence he traced its course to the ocean in the Gulf of Benin. Richard and John Lander were thus the first white men to make the voyage of the Niger. Five years later Richard Lander was killed in Western Africa, where he was in the employ of a mercantile company.

“In 1850 the English Government sent out another expedition, headed by James Richardson, an Englishman, accompanied by two Germans, Dr. Overweg and Dr.

Barth. Later another German, Dr. Vogel, was attached to the expedition. Mr. Richardson and Dr. Overweg died of disease, and Dr. Vogel was assassinated. Barth was the only one of the party who returned to Europe. He visited Timbuctoo, and navigated a part of the Niger, but did not descend it to the sea.

“I mentioned the assassination of Dr. Vogel, and it shows the power of suspicion in Africa. He had a very handsome horse which attracted the cupidity of the grand vizier of the sultan of one of the countries through which the doctor was traveling. The vizier wanted the horse as a present, but the doctor refused to give him away. Thereupon he was denounced as a magician because he wrote with a pen without ink (a lead-pencil), and for this crime of sorcery he was beheaded.

“Another German, Dr. Rolfs,” continued the youth, “made a journey from Tripoli, by way of the Niger, to the Gulf of Benin; and still another German, Dr. Nachtigal, has made an extensive journey through the countries south of Lake Chad, and traversed Darfoor to the Nile, whence he returned to Europe. Two or three French explorers have passed through these regions and added to the stock of knowledge concerning them, but there is a great deal yet to be learned, and we shall hope that our own experiences will not be found without value.”

“You have given us a very good summary of the explorations in these regions,” said the doctor. “I did not know that you were so well informed on the subject.”

Just then the sheikh called to the doctor to announce that they were coming to some rapids in the river where it

would be necessary to land in order to consider whether the boats could descend with safety. Accordingly, the flotilla was headed for the shore, and shortly came to land. The boats were made fast, and then our three friends, accompanied by Renaud and Abd-el-Ali, walked along the river's edge until they came to the rapids. Several natives were there and offered to run through the broken water for a slight compensation. Their offer was accepted, and the sheikh and Renaud got into a boat with them and made the descent without difficulty. It was decided that the three smaller boats of the party could make the descent without difficulty, and accordingly they were run past the falls and moored safely below them.

As to the menagerie boat, it was deemed judicious to land the animals and walk them around the falls, while the boat, thus lightened of its burden, was shot through the waters, barely missing a rock in its passage. After descending the rapids the menagerie boat was brought to the shore and the animals re-embarked. After their first experience at Kabara, the camels and horses made hardly any resistance to going on board. Ned said he believed they understood they were saved a great deal of fatigue when transported in a boat, and were therefore glad to accept the situation.

Camp was formed that night on the mainland, and not on an island, for the very good reason that sunset came when there were no islands in sight. There was a native village close to their camping place, but the inhabitants showed no hostility to the strangers like those already described. The sheikh succeeded in buying a quantity of

eggs and two chickens; the latter were thin and light, but they made a very fair stew, and formed a very important part of the evening's meal. Traces of lions and elephants were seen on the shore, and our young friends learned from the natives that these animals abounded in that region. Their gardens were occasionally trampled and devastated by elephants, and they had dug a pit in which they hoped to capture the next intruder.

The journey continued down the river very peaceably. A day or two after the passage of the rapids we have just mentioned the travelers came to a place where, for half a mile or more, the river narrowed considerably, and dashed over and among numerous rocks. Here it was necessary to land all the cargo and transport it around the falls on the backs of the camels and horses. The boats were also taken overland, although it would have been possible to send them down by water, but the risk of damage to them was too great. There was a fairly good road on the south side of the river, so that the transporting of boats and cargoes was made without difficulty, though it consumed an entire day.

Contrary to the expectation of our friends, the natives along the river gave no further signs of hostility, with two or three exceptions that were of no material consequence. In these cases the natives ordered them to land, and made demonstrations that were not at all friendly, but no shots were fired on either side. The party made a brief stay at Say, and also at Yaouri, but in each instance they sent the sheikh Abd-el-Ali to shore to ascertain whether the three strangers would be kindly received or not. He

brought back word that the natives were perfectly friendly, and that they could visit the market-place with every assurance of safety. The towns were so nearly like those they had already seen that a description is unnecessary. It was near Yaouri that Mungo Park lost his life.

Down and down the river the travelers floated, and about two o'clock one afternoon Abd-el-Ali told them that at the next bend of the river they would come in sight of the point where the Niger and the Benoue form their junction. All eyes were turned in that direction, and as the boat swung around the bend, the mouth of the river coming in from the east was plainly visible.

"Look! look!" said Ned. "Just look! there comes a steamboat down the other river."

He pointed with his index finger in the direction of the stream, and there, sure enough, was a steamboat coming down the river, and evidently heading for a small town at the point where the waters met.

"We are coming to civilization again," said Harry. "We shall leave the lands of the savage behind us when once we set foot on the deck of that boat."

"Quite true," said the doctor; "steamboats and savages do not belong together, and whenever the two come in contact the steamboat generally gets the best of it."

"I wonder," said Ned, "how long they have been running steamboats on the Niger."

"A British commercial company was organized in 1852," replied the doctor, "for the purpose of establishing trading stations along the Niger and its tributaries and navigating the rivers with steamboats. The original com-

pany was merged into another, and then again into another company. A French company was organized for the same business, and for several years a keen competition was maintained between the British and French, and finally the French company was bought out by its British rival. A considerable trade has been developed in the valley of the Niger, and an excellent thing about it is that the company refrains from selling firearms and spirituous liquors. In refusing to sell firearms and gunpowder it is looking out for its own interests by depriving the natives of the means of taking hostile advantage of them. In prohibiting the sale of alcohol, it is more philanthropic than in suppressing the traffic in firearms, as the profits on liquors are very large, and the consumption is unlimited.

“The Niger, Benoue, and other rivers in the valley are navigated as far as steamboats can run. The usual trade goods of Africa are brought here, and in return for them the boats carry away ivory, gold-dust, hides, skins, tanned leather, gums, palm oil, and other products of the country. The trade is not large, but the profits are heavy. At the trading stations the price asked for goods is double the price asked for the same articles at the mouth of the river, while the prices paid for ivory and other African products are only half what they sell for at Bonny, the port at the Niger’s entrance into the sea.”

While this conversation was going on, the boats proceeded steadily on their course, and an hour or so after the steamboat had made her landing the flotilla of Dr. Whitney swung up and made fast to the bank close by

the steamer. Ned and Harry wanted at once to go on board the civilized craft, but the doctor restrained them by suggesting that they had better wait until after seeing the official in charge of the trading post.

The station consisted of several houses built with walls and roofs, and decidedly suggestive of European architecture. These houses were surrounded by a strong palisade of posts stuck into the earth, close together, and rising about ten or twelve feet above the ground. Outside of this palisade there was a cluster of native huts and cheap dwellings, forming a village. The indications were that the country was not altogether peaceful, the palisade being intended for defence in case of an attack by the natives.

Our three friends directed their steps towards the main entrance of the palisade. They passed through the gateway, where they were met by an intelligent servant who spoke English quite well, and took their names to the factor, or agent, Captain Armstrong. That gentleman came out and greeted the strangers with great cordiality.

“I’ve heard of you repeatedly,” said he; “the news of your coming has been brought to me several times by merchants from Kukawa, Kano, and other places. I’m very glad, indeed, to greet you, and you can consider that the station and all it contains belong to yourselves.”

Dr. Whitney thanked the captain for his kindness, and said that his demands upon the station would not be very heavy. Then they had a short talk on general subjects, which ended with an invitation for the doctor and his young friends to occupy rooms in the company’s house

until their departure. They accepted the invitation, and were assigned to their quarters at once.

Captain Armstrong said he would expect them to dine with him at seven o'clock, and he gave orders for the doctor's retinue to be supplied with food. The doctor learned on inquiry that the steamer would leave on the next day for Bonny, and he arranged to take passage on her. He also arranged for Captain Armstrong to take charge of the camels, horses, and all the remaining goods belonging to the party. He was to sell them to the best advantage, and remit the proceeds to the doctor when all transactions had been completed.

In preparing themselves for dinner our friends abandoned the African dress and resumed their European garments. The youths regarded themselves in the mirror with some astonishment, and Ned said it would take him a few days to become acquainted with himself, after wearing outlandish clothes for so long. About noon the next day the steamboat "Wellington," of the Royal African Company, started down the Niger in the direction of Bonny, carrying with her the three travelers whom we have so long been following, and also Renaud, Yusef, and Abdullah, who were to return to Algeria.

Our friends found the lower part of the Niger flowing through a densely wooded region which abounded in savage beasts and savage men. They made brief stoppages at several stations, and in due time came to the ocean at Bonny, and greeted the blue expanse of the broad Atlantic with three ringing cheers.

THE END.

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below,
or on the date to which renewed. Renewals only:
Tel. No. 642-3405
Renewals may be made 4 days prior to date due.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

APR 18 1973 65

REC'D LD

U. of Minnesota
INTER-LIBRARY
LOAN

FEB 11 1974

LD21A-20m-3,'73
(Q8677s10)476-A-31

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

Master Lea Davita

42

Law

M311431

1751

